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# NATIONAL IDEALISM AND A STATE CHURCH

# NATIONAL IDEALISM

AND

# A STATE CHURCH

*A Constructive Essay in Religion*

BY

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LONDON
WILLIAMS AND NORGATE
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1907

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Dedicated

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR JOHN SEELEY

# PREFACE

Speaking of St Paul's idea of the Lord's Supper as the unifying sign of fellowship among members of the Church, Dean Armitage Robinson says: "Paul, in this as in so many other instances, arrived at his interpretation through the exigencies of his special mission. His task of welding into one the Jewish and Gentile elements led him to develop the conception of the corporate unity of all Christians. Food has ever been the token of unity —the bond of equal intercourse. Refusal to take food together is the symbol of exclusiveness and caste distinction. The Jew could not, by the later Pharisaic ordinances, eat with the Gentile. If Christ were for Jew and Gentile alike, the Eucharist, the feast of the new and all-inclusive 'covenant,' must be the common meal of Jew and Gentile. This in itself must have given it to Paul a special significance."

I cite this passage because the principle underlying its reasoning contains the only apology I am anxious to offer for this book. I have arrived at my interpretation of the religious needs of England to-day through the exigencies of the work which now for well-nigh a score of years I have been carrying on in founding the Moral Instruction League and a number of Ethical Societies. The ideas in this book, if they have not been "hewn from life," at

least owe their peculiarities, and what to many may seem their angularities, to my twenty years of constructive effort in ethical preaching and organising.

Whatever occasion for offence others may find in my doctrines, no one, I am sure, can fail to see that for me they are spiritually inevitable. They are not the result of merely abstract reasoning or of any love of paradox. Nor have I met with such success as could throw a glamour about them before my eyes. Indeed, the more nearly my efforts have approached to failure, the deeper and steadier has become my conviction that the principles which I am trying to spread and which I advocate as a new foundation in thought for the historic Church, are essentially true and are worth working for in the scorn of consequence. Accordingly, whatever adverse criticism I may receive, I have no fear that anyone whose own convictions are the outgrowth of his own inner experience will think my book lacking in fundamental piety or in that sense of responsibility which every man ought to feel who presumes to re-interpret religious traditions.

But the passage I have quoted from Dean Robinson furnishes not only an apology for a book like this. It suggests an inspiring analogy between Paul's mission and that of any man devoted to the task of transforming England into an organic unit of religious life. From that task is not lacking even the identical problem which confronted St Paul—the separation of Jew and Gentile. Not only in this, however, but in the many other cases of religious antagonism and misunderstanding within our nation, the duty of the hour is to find the bond of equal intercourse. Yes, and not only the bond but the symbol of the bond, that we may replace the symbol of exclusiveness and sectarian distinction by that of spiritual union.

Except that in the present contingency a new unifying

symbol is an absolute necessity, there would have been no occasion, in treating of National Idealism and a State Church, to give to the question of ritual the prominence I have here assigned it. But indeed, so all-important seems to me the problem of Church services and rites, that I shall shortly publish a volume entitled "National Idealism and the Book of Common Prayer," with the object of calling attention to the claims, if not of my solution, at least of the difficulty that waits to be solved.

S. C.

*October*, 1907.

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# NATIONAL IDEALISM AND A STATE CHURCH

## CHAPTER I

### CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND PERSONAL RELIGION

Our age is turning more and more away from the old-time habit of trust in intelligent beings other than man. But there is by no means a corresponding decline of the sense of individual frailty. On the contrary, never was the consciousness of duty left undone so deep and widespread. Not that men have become worse, but they have been facing themselves more unflinchingly. They have more carefully weighed themselves in the balances, with the result that they know better than before by how much they are wanting. And never was the need of regular means of inward discipline so strongly felt. Men realise the necessity of taking themselves in hand betimes. But the help they once expected from invisible and incorporeal agencies they are now demanding, with the enthusiasm of a new faith, from their fellow-mortals. Although each be blind and weak, it is felt that infinite is the help, both material and spiritual, which man collectively can give to man individually.

Among the morally intelligent, religion is accordingly ceasing to be looked upon as a merely private and individual concernment.

Until the last decade of the nineteenth century, those who had discarded communion with supernatural beings inclined to the belief that adequate consolation could be drawn by each person from the inner recesses of his own soul. The profounder life of the human spirit was supposed to be of such a nature that to attempt to communicate it was to expose it to degradation. "We descend to meet," said Emerson. To crave religious communion with one's fellow-mortals was thought to be a denial of the sufficiency of one's own inner store of spiritual wealth. Solitude and the vastness of isolation were the only immensities befitting the self-contained soul.

Those who discarded communion with supernatural beings thus withdrew into themselves. But whole classes in the community who have retained a belief in a personal Creator and in the traditional teachings of the Church have also inclined in recent years to count fellowship with other human beings in religious practices as superfluous. The very fact that they find the consolations of fellowship in communion with personal agencies outside of the social organism of mankind, has made them the more ready to dispense with religious communion with other men. Within the churches themselves church discipline has, except in special centres, been more and more falling into disrepute. Many have interpreted this tendency as indicating and involving a decline of religious conviction. But such an interpretation is incorrect. The religious life has become less social, but there is no corresponding decrease of ancient belief. Such a reaction upon inward convictions would surely have followed in the course of time. But no one can have become acquainted, for instance, with the religious life of Germany during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and not have noticed that although, as compared with England and America, the

Church has dwindled almost to the vanishing-point, there has not taken place anything like a corresponding decrease of belief in the existence of a personal Creator or in the divinity of Jesus Christ, or of reverence for the Bible. The truth is that the doctrine of individualism has been injuring church life, yet has been having the effect temporarily of intensifying the religious devotion of those who already had attained an individualised spiritual consciousness of their own. It has injured church life in the same way that in politics it had been working against the full functioning of the State. By the year 1860 the doctrine of *laisser-faire* had caused the Government of England to restrict itself almost entirely to police duties. A century before, the Constitution of America had in similar manner been framed under such suspicion of State regulation that the Government was not given full powers of sovereignty. No wonder that the Church has similarly suffered. Nor is it a wonder that individuals pre-eminently religious by nature, accepting the doctrine of individualism, have interpreted religion as a merely private concern, and have therefore considered all corporate action, even when voluntary, as a violation of the religious spirit.

This idea has so prepossessed the mind of Professor William James that in his brilliantly suggestive book on *Varieties of Religious Experience* he begins his investigation of "personal religion" only after setting aside churches and all their works as irrelevant. He justifies this procedure on the ground that ecclesiastical organisation emanates from individual religious geniuses, but that individual religious genius does not itself arise from contact with church organisation. "A survey of history," he says, "shows us that as a rule religious geniuses attract disciples, and produce groups of sympathisers. When these groups get strong enough to 'organise'

themselves, they become ecclesiastical institutions with corporate ambitions of their own. The spirit of politics and the lust of dogmatic rule are then apt to enter and to contaminate the originally innocent thing; so that when we hear the word 'religion' nowadays, we think inevitably of some 'church' or other; . . . . but in this course of lectures ecclesiastical institutions hardly concern us at all. The religious experience which we are studying is that which lives itself out within the private breast. First-hand individual experience of this kind has always appeared as a heretical sort of innovation to those who witnessed its birth. Naked comes it into the world and lonely; and it has always, for a time at least, driven him who had it into the wilderness, often into the literal wilderness out of doors, where the Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, St Francis, George Fox, and so many others had to go."

Now, in the name of history, I protest that all conclusions drawn from this premise are rendered worthless by the initial blunder of imagining that ecclesiastical institutions have no significant and helpful bearing upon the inmost religious experience. It is the very opposite of truth to say that such experience comes into the world "lonely." There never was a great religious innovator who was not nourished and fostered, as it were, at the bosom and in the very heart of an ecclesiastical organisation. Jesus was conceived in the womb of Judaism; Savonarola and Luther of Catholicism; Wesley of Anglicanism. They all loved their spiritual mother the Church. Their very innovations were for her sake. Their sacrifice was for her. Not one single religious genius known to history discovered and brought forth, in isolation and by direct unmediated communion with the Infinite, "the originally innocent thing" which the

Church at first perhaps failed to appreciate and afterwards adopted. Nor has any religious genius known to history ever been the product of what is called "the world" as distinct from the Church. Even the withdrawing into the wilderness on the part of religious innovators was a taking with them of the precious secret of the ecclesiastical organisation, that they might penetrate deeper into its spirit.

It is quite unwarrantable, therefore, for a psychologist to imagine that a man's mind is isolated from social institutions simply because he has withdrawn for a period to meditate. Even George Fox did not get by isolation the new truth he uttered, but by contact with the quickening social life of his time, when all England was a Church and religious controversy filled every nook and corner of the nation. Thousands were feeling what they could not express. In him, exquisitely sensitive as he was to the needs of the social organism about him, these feelings became conscious, articulate and effective.

If it were impossible for Professor James to see the whole historic truth that personal experience comes from church organisation as much as church organisation grows out of someone's personal experience—if he could only see half of this truth—it is a great pity that he should have seen the less significant part, and devoted his popular gifts to that side of it which can never bear fruit unto life. The world's need is to know under what controllable conditions geniuses with fresh religious experience appear in society. If society knew that, it would bring forth a thousand where now, by haphazard, it produces only one.

If we are ever to deepen personal religious experience, it will be by intensifying, developing and systematising church discipline. Only ecclesiastical institutions quicken

religious emotion and clarify religious insight to the degree that drives men, stung with the splendour of new vision, into the desert, and then back again into the slums of the city, their plans now thought out and their purposes and policy fixed and matured. If we want a Jesus to reappear on earth, some nation like England must do for five centuries what the Jewish theocracy did for as long a time as that—focus the attention and desire of men and women by means of a Temple service, in expectation of faith, upon the necessity of a deliverer. As regards Savonarola, if we think of the Catholic Church as consisting not only of the immediate phase which dominated in Italy in his day, but of the whole reach back to the time of Jesus, and even through Judaism to Isaiah, we cannot deny that all that was new and most characteristic in Savonarola was old and most distinctive in the Church. The same is true of Luther. Had he not been a monk, he never could have made Germany. Likewise of Wesley. It was no accident that such unique experience of religion at first hand as his came to one whose father and mother both were preachers and fanatics of church discipline, as were also his remoter ancestors, and that he was bred in Oxford, the very hotbed of ecclesiasticism.

How could anyone, in the face of these well-known facts, write a book on personal religious experience from the point of view that ecclesiastical institutions hardly concern it at all? Even Emerson, with his fresh democratic American gospel of self-trust, never could have gained his unique penetration and insight had he not been trained to be a preacher to an organised religious body, had he not studied at a university founded to make preachers for a religious organisation, and had he not sprung from generations of such preachers. Nor is it a mere coincidence that the founder of the first Ethical

Society, Professor Felix Adler, was educated to become a Jewish rabbi, and was descended from a line of Jewish rabbis centuries long.

The truth which a study of the historic facts brings to light is that great heretics, as well as the most powerful defenders of the old order, are formed only at the very heart of ecclesiastical institutions, and that heresies are but vital modifications in the spirit of the old order, due to a new intellectual and social environment, to meet for the Church's sake exigencies of the coming hour. The spirit of orthodoxy and the spirit of heresy are one ; the opposite of both is worldly indifference. Let heretics remember their kinship with orthodox enthusiasts. Let them beware ; for if they destroy instead of preserving ecclesiastical institutions, they will kill the goose that lays their golden egg. Instead of live humanitarian idealism there will remain only the dead matter of selfish conventionality. It is as unscientific to think that fresh spiritual insight can be gained in isolation from organised religious bodies as to imagine that scientific discoveries and inventions like those of radium and wireless telegraphy will come to men and women who have been kept all their lives aloof from chemical and physical laboratories and from the great educational institutions of technical research.

This error is the more astonishing at the beginning of the era when at last the law of cause and effect and the idea of the spiritual interdependence of mankind have taken practical hold of all the great thinkers of the world.

A lamentable effect of Professor James's position is that, by commending spiritual isolation, it unwittingly panders to vanity, egotism and the fantastic vapourings of incipient insanity. Except for its magnifying of each

individual reader's importance in spiritual experience, Professor James's book would hardly have received so widespread and cordial a welcome among the preachers of all denominations. The one thing which these men presumably are attempting to build up is church organisation; yet this is the one thing which, according to Professor William James, has hardly any concern with first-hand personal religious experience. The truth is, Professor James has been a victim of a false and therefore transient individualism. His psychology has been blind to the fact (for us as patent as the day) that those whose minds are most self-reliant, intuitive and creative are the ones most sensitively receptive to the higher tendency of the age and society in which they live. When they were least aware of drawing spiritual vitality from the community about them, then most was the common life streaming into them and invigorating them.

During the last ten years, however (despite recent publications to the contrary by men of an earlier generation), not only has the main trend of enlightenment been away from communion with superhuman agencies, but the religious geniuses of our day have at the same time become painfully aware that they have no ethical life apart from the men and women who constitute the world about them. They know that if from these they cannot derive the inspiration which men in former times undoubtedly did receive under the discipline of the old religious practices, their souls must wither at the root. But they are beginning to realise that a man may get spiritual sustenance from others, although he be under the illusion that he is drawing the waters of life from some inner well unsupplied from social sources. They are becoming convinced that those who attribute their salvation to supernatural agents and to the belief in such

are in fact deriving their power and enthusiasm ultimately not from within any more than from above, but from round about—from the spiritual reservoir of their nation, their city, their church, and, through literature and history, from the past of human society carried over and flowing on into the present time.

Now, it may be contended that a man can be spiritually in touch with the religious life of his times although he be not a member of any religious organisation. He may go from one religious meeting to another and hear all the preachers of his town. In periodical literature and books he may follow the great controversies of the day on theology. Through the daily Press he may become aware of all the currents and cross-currents, the main stream and all the eddies and back-waters of the spiritual consciousness of the time. What, therefore, it may be asked, is the need of his entering into the intimacy, the routine and the dogmatism of active membership in any one church organisation? Let him spare himself such trammels, and in the freedom of independence let him draw vitality from all the sources round about him. By thus holding aloof and yet remaining receptive he would avoid all the disadvantages, pettinesses and corruptions which inevitably manifest themselves in the life of any organised body of human beings, and yet gain that which is highest and of enduring worth in them all.

In answer to this contention I would ask, Is it likely that any man who has never been nurtured at the bosom of a religious organisation, or has left it when he was eighteen or twenty years of age, could or would cultivate that closeness of touch with the religious life of the whole community, which would be needed to enable him to obtain a correct understanding and an enthusiasm for religion? All experience proves that a person who is

outside an organised society never can possibly gain an intimacy with its principles, aims and methods. However much he tries, he will remain veritably an outsider, and all those who are in the secrets and under the discipline of the organisation will realise that he has missed something that is essential to a correct understanding. Still less does experience justify the notion that a man born in the wilderness or remaining there more than a very brief period—let us say forty days—will continue to have any inner religious life at all. The very organs of religion in his spirit will become atrophied or petrified. After twenty years of isolation he may be a fanatic, but he will be a fanatic whom every member of organised life will know to pity rather than respect. He will have no message for his age or any other age, because messages come from that source from which he has cut himself off.

Would Professor James maintain in regard to scientific insight and enthusiasm that it also lives itself out within the private breast unrelated to the organised scientific life of the community? If a man makes great discoveries in chemistry or physics, is it not due, at least in our age of more than primitive knowledge, to his discipline and discipleship in scientific organisations? Does he not, in withdrawing for greater concentration on some special problem, take with him the whole tradition and apparatus of scientific investigation? Further, is it not true that if in his isolated investigation he remains long aloof and falls out of touch with what other scientific men are doing in the privacy of scientific organisations but have not yet published to the lay world, he will be overtaken, and left a veritable fossil?

In science it is inconceivable how a man can make new discoveries, can manifest original insight which shall add to the world's knowledge, if he be not a member, or has

not been a member for the greater part of his life, of those social bodies of specialists which are pursuing the same lines of investigation as himself. What, then, is this strange difference implied by Professor James between insight and enthusiasm for religion and insight and enthusiasm for physical science, that would make him cast something very like contempt upon ecclesiastical organisations? For surely Professor James would not for a moment speak of physical and chemical laboratories, technical and scientific schools and universities, as not themselves contributing to the wisdom and enthusiasm of scientific geniuses, but only springing up in the trail of such meteors? It must be remembered that the sentences which I have quoted from Professor James, in which he waves aside ecclesiastical organisations as not producing but being only produced by religious geniuses, contain no merely passing observation, but are introduced to justify the entire omission from his whole volume of any tracing of spiritual conversions and illuminations to the action of churches upon the innermost centre of men's souls.

The idea of the self-made man in science, in art or in literature, has been for ever exploded. But as religion is still more complicated and the religious tradition of the world still longer and more complex and involved than its scientific or artistic interest, surely the self-made man in religion, in proportion as he is self-made, must be more grotesque and impossible than in other domains of human effort. Indeed, one may trace ninety-nine per cent. of all the follies and vanities of devoutly religious men to the notion that somehow in religion one need not take counsel of one's fellow-men either for warning or example, but may open up in isolation infinite inner sources of light and life.

It may be true that ecclesiastical organisations begin to develop corporate ambitions of their own, and that the spirit of politics and the lust of dogmatic rule enter and contaminate the originally innocent thing. But is not this imperfection equally to be noted in schools, in universities, in cities, in states, in families, in business organisations? Yet would anybody expect a man to become richer or more learned or more civic by standing outside these imperfect institutions than by entering into them? Furthermore, does a historic knowledge of churches lead us to think that churches are any more corrupt than other social bodies? And does not a knowledge of other social bodies lead us to think that their ambitions, their politics, and their lust of domination are often more than offset by a still greater development of their true ends and methods? Harvard University, if one knew intimately its inside workings, would show its fair proportion of frailties and corruptions. Yet in the eyes of the whole world Harvard University stands not for these, but as the foster-mother of such geniuses as Professor William James. If he be right in this one particular as to the relation of private religion to ecclesiastical organisations, it must be—since churches are not more corrupt than other social bodies—that condemnation should be equally visited upon all organisations. Accordingly, the practical conclusion would be that specialists in psychology should break away from professorial chairs. Yet Professor James's judgment is right in regard to universities. And religious geniuses who enter the Church will not only enter to remain laymen but to become professors and officials.

I would further ask, Can anyone cite the case of a human being who has devoted his life to religion and yet whose childhood was not passed among people who were

active members of some church? If his own parents were not such, were not his teachers at school? Did he not come under the daily influence of some priest or preacher, or did not some other religious enthusiast, solicitous for the welfare of his soul, seek him out and inspire and direct him and try to draw him into church fellowship? Did any religious genius thus in contact with the organised ecclesiastical bodies about him remain aloof from them, and yet systematically and persistently keep up his interest in religion? Confident of the answer which every student of religious biography must give, I ask, Did not such religious geniuses not only enter into some one of the ecclesiastical organisations, but even push forward to the very altar, seeking and taking holy orders, becoming not only active members but positive leaders and, as it were, professional heads of the church?

Again I would meet Professor James's individualism by the answer which must be given to the question, Does not every innovator and heretic in religion derive his followers not from "the world," not from the non-religious and unorganised public, but directly from those who have long undergone the discipline of church communion? Or from those who, having long lived in religious fellowship with others and having found the spirit of religion germinating into original life in their own souls, have under dictation from the new centre of life within withdrawn into temporary isolation, but now gladly co-operate with the fellow-innovator who is voicing their own living convictions? I give testimony, as one having attempted to organise ethical societies—which in their name and originally in the utterances of their leaders made no show of being religious bodies—that generally those who have responded to the call of the Ethical Movement have been already prepared for its gospel by

devout and regular discipline within the historic churches. It is not the man of the world, it is not the isolated Agnostic, it is not the individualist, who knows how to appreciate the new revelation that has come in his own day. The men who have always been outside of churches may care for music or painting or the drama or athletics or wealth. But they have been too much occupied with these concerns ever to have attended intimately to the new religious promptings of their own innermost souls.

It would be a pity if, as the result of the wide popularity of Professor James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, the impression should arise and become fixed, that the psychology of religious experience by its very method and on account of the nature of the religious life is necessarily individualistic. It is perfectly consistent with the psychological study of the innermost, intensest, and most original religious experience to trace that experience to the nutrition and protection which the ecclesiastical organisation gives to the growing soul. It is as consistent with psychology so to do as it is with biology to study the life in embryo of each individual animal organism, and to trace its nutrition and its protection to the environing and vitalising organism of the mother. When the new organism has become wholly severed, then of course it is relatively free; its vitality cannot again become dependent upon that of the parent. Yet this very independence is undeniably the result of its prior vital dependence. Although I conceive the church to be the cause of intuitive revelations and of religious reactions against the organisations of religion, I admit that the innermost experience of the soul, when fully ripe, is vitally self-sufficient. Nevertheless, it is so because within the church organisation a long period of gestation had been taking place. The organisation was feeding

the soul life of the individual, until it should itself reach an inner state when it could react against the parent and break off and be free. So patent are these facts that one wonders whether Professor William James has not been rendered blind to them by some unconscious bias. It would almost seem as if he had approached his investigation of personal religion on the presupposition that its phenomena are the manifestation of occult powers in the soul which are not to be derived from the environing social organism of mankind, but which emanate directly from a transcendent and super-sensible world of spirits. A person holding such a belief might naturally become incapable of seeing the historic social causes of inner experiences.

How else was it possible for Professor James to overlook the conspicuous fact that personal conversions to religion are nearly always special instances of religious epidemic, and that such epidemic spreads not wholly unintentionally and unplanned from those centres of organised life called ecclesiastical institutions ?

The high value I place upon the spiritual discipline of ecclesiastical organisation arises from my recognition of the perfectly patent connection of cause and effect existing between fellowship in the moral life and moral enthusiasm. My protest, on the other hand, against the tracing of conversions to supernatural or occult causes is due to my acceptance of the fundamental presupposition of all psychological reasoning—that no special mental phenomenon shall ever be traced either to occult or supernatural sources which can be accounted for by the action of specific social influences and stimuli. Professor James, although he does not commit himself overtly to a spiritistic source of inward illumination, nevertheless seems to favour it. At the same time he traces conversion to sub-conscious and

unconscious processes, which in turn, by the very limitation which he prescribes for himself at the outset of his investigation, he refuses to trace to definite social circumstances and to conscious influences and the organised efforts of other human beings.

Now what is it that actually takes place during a revival? We can easily discover the essential nature of what goes on, if we remember that religious folk have "lumped together as the grace of God"—to use Mr W. T. Stead's expression—all the diffused and disseminated influences and agencies throughout the community that are beneficent and ethical. A revival is an organisation of these good influences and agencies so as to bring them to bear with their full force upon the character of individual members of the community. Conversion is the surrender of the individual to these influences. He may not be a member of any ecclesiastical institution, but it is such an institution which organises the influences and by controlling them and concentrating them intensifies their power.

If we assume that conversion is an advantage to the man converted, we can but regret the tendency to trace it to supernatural or occult causes; for no one would presume to be able to control the supernatural and the occult in the same manner in which he would expect to make use of purely human and natural forces. It is a pity that an effect like conversion, which is capable of being wrought in millions of men by the society in which they live, should be generally declared to be beyond direct human control. It is an infinite pity, since ever-increasing multitudes of men refuse to believe in the supernatural and the occult and yet are told that the sudden transition from badness to goodness is a supernatural event. They accordingly are bewildered and hardened.

They are distracted from entertaining and absorbing that holy influence which the revival irradiates, simply because it is labelled supernatural and occult. Indeed, the majority of organisers of revivalistic movements require of every convert, not simply that he shall renounce the evil and turn to the good, but that he shall also accept supernaturalism with its accompanying occultism. They brand as counterfeit every transition from badness to goodness not effected under their peculiar interpretation.

There are thousands whom the churches do not now convert because of the prevalent supernaturalism, which offends the modern scientific spirit. Should the churches once drop their supernaturalism, no scepticism, no agnosticism, no freedom of thought would prevent anyone's reaping the benefits of conversion. Millions would be wakened up to their own higher selfhood who now remain spiritually dead, if only Christian teachers would but drop their mediæval theology and their individualistic psychology with its trust in the sub-conscious and the occult. These theories are antagonistic to the complete and thorough control of the good influences latent in the community.

The pernicious effect of individualistic psychology and supernaturalistic theology is seen in the preference given by most people to whatever is purely spontaneous in the religious life and their dislike for whatever has been planned and worked up with deliberate intention. Many persons entertain this prejudice against conscious and systematic effort without being aware that it is the offshoot of supernaturalism and occultism. Such persons might readily admit that individual conversion was due to the spiritual state for the time being of the community at large, but they would shrink from the idea that this spiritual state had come otherwise than spontaneously.

They could scarcely believe that it really was holy and sacred if it had been planned six months ahead and if definite means of propaganda and organisation had brought it into existence.

Although those who dislike the conscious efforts of ecclesiastical institutions as somehow incompatible with true spirituality may not be aware of it themselves, this sentiment of theirs is essentially opposed to a belief in the spiritual organism of society as the source of redemptive energy. They maintain that a revival is more genuine and more holy if it come quite spontaneously. But why should man's purposes and man's reason and man's foresight have a polluting effect? Are not consciousness and self-consciousness the highest manifestations of humanity and the chief blessings which society works in its individual members? Why, again, is an event in the individual soul produced by occult and mysterious forces or by unembodied spirits any more beautiful or beneficent than one produced by human purpose and foresight? Such a sentiment can only arise in a preference for the superhuman, which casts discredit upon and paralyses the efficiency of the human. Why is the conscious less to be treasured than the sub-conscious? Why is effort less holy than spontaneity? If it be not less holy, why is a revival systematically planned and controlled less sacred and beneficent than an unpremeditated outburst? Those who discourage the effort of others in bringing about a man's conversion cast a slur upon conscious human effort altogether.

Now, there is urgent need that the beneficent influences and ethical agencies latent within the nation should be wisely directed and applied for the healing of the people. So far as these influences are uncontrolled and unorganised, and not even recognised as existing and as

controllable, they are practically non-existent. So generally are they latent that whenever by any chance or by the half-unconscious efforts of supernaturalists they once begin to operate, they are so unusual and unfamiliar, that they seem to the unreflecting mind to emanate from some source outside of our accustomed universe. Society itself thus gets no credit for the best that is in it. Only the evil is attributed to human beings and their social organisation. All this beautiful freshness of the spirit, this wonderful influx of energy, insight, and joyous unselfish life, are laid to the credit of some unseen universe. What is good in society has brought it about that men who were morally dead have become alive. Yet society, rightly blamed for their death, is not rightly praised for their resurrection. Society has saved them. They lacked motive to live, and the power to live aright was beyond their strength ; but now it is as difficult for them to sink to their former level as it was before for them to rise to their present height. Yet society, which has lifted them, is the very thing from whose clutches they imagine that they have now at last happily escaped. Such is the confusion of our day, that churches do not see that the only philosophy which fully appreciates their function is what I may venture to call social mysticism or mystic socialism. The supernaturalism and the individualistic occultism, with which the churches are now saturated, weaken enormously the vitality of church organisation and the power of the churches to quicken individuals into original centres of spiritual insight and enthusiasm. It is only mystic socialism or social mysticism which fully realises that when a man is converted, it is because into his central personality have rushed those higher influences and agencies hitherto latent in the community which before scarcely touched him. Now they have become

his very self. Not only that, but he himself has become an active point of creative ethical energy.

What takes place at every revival is exactly analogous to the physical phenomenon which is witnessed when a burning-glass is so held between the sun and a piece of wood that first there is a bright spot of focussed light, and then a charring and smoking of the wood, till finally the wood itself bursts into a flame shining back to its parent sun. It becomes a blaze, with power to communicate its own heat and light to other objects of like nature with itself. Now the organisation of ethical agencies by ecclesiastical institutions forms a burning-glass which gathers and directs the love of men and the love of duty, hitherto diffused and therefore weak, upon individual human beings who have never before felt the good in overmastering strength. Lonely isolated souls, timid and shy natures, the cynical, the violent, the envious, the jealous, the malicious, all secretly self-indulgent victims of vicious habit, now for the first time experience the quickening intensity and wholesome joy of being cared for, respected, and sought out as of infinite worth. Divinely tender is the message with which every ecclesiastical institution heads its revival—that the lowest and most degraded sinner is precious beyond all price. This message is coupled with the announcement of the infinite worth of purity, justice, cleanliness of life, and of all personal and civic virtue. The influences and agencies, beneficent and ethical, are now concentrated by the ecclesiastical institution to such a degree of potency upon the individual man that they veritably create him into a new God-point. If conversions took place unrelated to revivals, either accidental or pre-arranged, there might be some ground for the individualistic or the super-naturalistic theory of the origin of personal religious

insight and enthusiasm. But in the face of the undeniable connection of institutional life with the conversions which take place over the whole area where the churches' influence is operating, one is forced by all the canons of logical inference to believe that religious genius is made luminous through the action of the church upon it.

Where there is no concentration upon individuals of the redemptive influences and agencies which are already stored up within society, there are no conversions. There must be at least a few persons actively united in devotion to the higher life, else others who are spiritually cold and dead do not experience a new birth. It is quite true that there may be no actual pre-arrangement to bring about a revival. The persons converted may not have been attending religious meetings of any kind. In such cases, however, the spiritual energy overflows the meetings or has been preserved in the community from past revivals. By some happy chance it lodges, like a flake of fire, in the soul of some isolated individual and sets it aglow. Always—unless the methods of inference universally acknowledged as valid cannot be applied here—conversion is due to natural social forces impinging upon the rational will of an individual. The more one investigates religious experience, the more one is led to the conviction that there never has been a conversion where such social forces were not, at least accidentally, impinging upon the individual's mind. And wherever the forces reach a certain degree of power and persistence, conversion is inevitable, even against the set determination of the individual himself. Thus it happens that what is called the working of the Holy Ghost in the inmost spirit of a man can always be brought about by the right sort of social organisation, and it can always be prevented by unfavourable social environment. Given the con-

ditions, the Holy Ghost is always manifested. This is not surprising if it be identical with the will of society as a spiritual organism. By psychologists who have no individualistic bias the Holy Ghost is readily identified with the Higher Will, the deeper selfhood, of some social group bound together in devotion to the moral ideal. It is perfectly true that the Holy Ghost cannot be arbitrarily and dictatorially summoned, but it is absolutely certain that it can be induced whenever any ecclesiastical institution is devoutly and wisely bent upon a manifestation of its presence and power. The Holy Ghost is a visitant that always comes, either in response to a given summons, or whenever by unpremeditated circumstance the avenues, into which it is for ever pressing, are opened. This simply means that the moral influences and agencies within the community have been so gathered together and directed that no one upon whom they are brought to bear can prevent himself from being lifted to and borne along on a higher plane than he would otherwise have reached. If social mysticism discloses the secret of personal religion, it is evident that the real religious interests of the nation are not only assailed by the old-fashioned supernaturalism, but are also being undermined by the very new-fashioned individualistic occultism. It is essential to religious development to check the social heresy that religious conversion is a private or subjective change effected by sub-conscious incubation within the individual's own mind and unrelated to society round about him.

It well may be that the soul's own energies have been secretly developing like a folded bud, and that now in the fullness of time the blossom bursts of itself into an expanded flower. But what are the forces which have been warming and moistening the sub-soil of the indi-

vidual's conscious mind? These, I maintain, are social influences; new moral vitality from the community round about is passing quietly but effectively into the most secret recesses of the individual soul; and we have no right to trace that vitality to a self-feeding source far within the individual, for we can plainly detect its social origin.

Every individual human spirit is a member of a spiritual organism; but that spiritual organism is not some transcendent invisible reality in the heavens above consciousness or in the dark depths beneath. It is the mental life of the historic nation in which the individual lives, the nation with all its traditions being itself one of the group of interdependent nations upon the earth. During a revival the idealistic forces, which mould nations as spiritual organisms, flow in upon the individual with such vitalising abundance that the General Will becomes identical with the individual's own will.

Of the two theories hostile to ecclesiastical institutions, individualistic occultism is more to be feared than supernaturalism. It teaches, if I may be allowed to reiterate, that the source of spiritual vitality is some inward, mysterious, non-social centre of eruptive psychic powers. It further teaches that these psychic centres are closely related to the secondary and subordinate nerve-centres. It accordingly dethrones man's primary conscious selfhood and links itself on to hypnotic states, favouring trance. It is blind to the organised social sources of spiritual originality. It sweeps aside and even rejects as adverse to real religious life the systematised disciplines and instructions of the Church. It implies that the true religious life is not due to, but is in spite of, ecclesiastical institutions. A truer psychology, organic and social, is sure to supersede this fashionable cult of individualistic

sub-consciousness. Then will the leaders of our ecclesiastical institutions discard individualism as well as supernaturalism. They will adopt social mysticism as the working hypothesis in ecclesiastical polity. They will teach that the organised spiritual forces in society itself constitute the incubating environment of each individual soul. They will count it as a mark of degeneracy to trace religious quickenings to self-generating subjective psychic sources. They will become fully aware how the invisible social energies are incessantly playing upon and modifying each individual's inmost mind, without his necessarily being conscious of them and even against his purpose. The leaders of ecclesiastical institutions will come to look upon the notion of a subliminal spiritual self as an unnecessary device of a superficial philosophy. They will see that nearly all the excesses and absurdities of religious enthusiasm, which have cast discredit upon it, are traceable either to supernaturalistic or occultistic presuppositions. The man who does not consciously attach himself to the organised spiritual environment of the nation, but burrows inward to some psychic centre remote from the invisible but real social organism, is making for the abysses of insanity, criminal egoism, self-deification, and the primordial slime of sensual occultism. When the leaders of the Church realise this tendency they will shrink in alarm from every form of individualistic psychology.

In the foregoing criticisms I have perhaps exposed with considerable clearness the method and results of religious individualism. But I have been able only incidentally to indicate what I mean by religious socialism. Let us now, therefore, more systematically consider the import of that philosophy of religion which traces the inmost developments in the private soul, and even the

most intense reactions against ecclesiastical institutions, to the spirit of those institutions themselves. The question here confronting us is, What constitutes the unit of religious life? What is the unified system of religious growth? Is it each individual person's own mind and character? Is he within himself a spiritual universe, integral and self-feeding, as the atomistic theory of society maintains; or is he perhaps supplied from above, as supernaturalism teaches? Or is his spiritual life due to an uprush from some subterranean depths, dark and inexplorable, as occultism would have us believe? Or, as social idealism teaches, does the individual in his spiritual life have no significance or even individuality apart from the society from the midst of which as a physical and psychic being he came forth, and by which he is nourished?

I have already indicated my own attachment to this socialistic theory. But in order to bring out its full significance, it is necessary to note the relation of the individual, not only to definite private religious organisations like local congregations and free churches, but also to state establishments which assume to be national, and to international organisations like the Roman Catholic Church which presume to dictate to states in matters of spiritual faith. Nor is even this enough. It is necessary to bear in mind the relation of the individual to the unorganised society round about him. Indeed, we may on the one side note the definite organisations of churches, the definite organisation which we call the State and hundreds of other special organised groups of individuals bound together in devotion to specific ends and dictating lines of conduct and disciplining individual members. But in addition to all these organisations every individual, over and above their influence, is subject to a thousand

influences of public opinion, of praise and blame, of prejudice and theory, which play round about him and modify and mould him every day and hour of his life. In this way the individual lives in society in general, as distinct from the definite state, or any church, or any private social corporation. This society in the main, for any individual, is the particular nation in which he lives. Now the nation, irrespective of its organisation into a state, unrelated to its political activity through its sovereign government, cannot be called an organisation ; but it may be held to be a more or less highly developed and integrated organism. It has approximately a unified life, although not centralised in some dominant point.

The specific question, then, before us is, What is the unit of religious life ? Is it the individual man ?

Those who have withdrawn from all church membership and believe supremely in self-reliance are inclined to affirm that the unit of religious life is each human being. If they recognise any other organic whole, it is nothing short of the unorganised human race, without government, forms, ceremonies, or rules. They name the human race, thus viewed, humanity, and recognise every individual human being as a member of this church of humanity, but look upon the individuals as making humanity, not upon humanity as making the individuals—in the sense in which, in the human body, it is the whole body in relation to which the hand as a hand has any significance or function. This extreme atomism in religion I shall not here attempt to refute. I have also sufficiently dwelt upon the supernaturalistic and the occult theories. More immediately demanding consideration is the opinion of those who are members of non-established religious bodies, like the various sects of England. Members of such bodies generally interpret their own special denomination

or sect as the organic unit to which they personally belong. They regard each man's own denomination as *his* unit of religious life. They look upon persons who are not members of any ecclesiastical organisation as not being religious and as cut off from the source of inspiration.

Roman Catholics and High Anglicans maintain that there is but one organic unit of religious life, and this is the Apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ, and vitally continuous through its various branches from the beginning until now.

There is, however, another view as to what the real ultimate organic unit in religion is. It is a view that as yet can claim scarcely any adherents, whether among Free Churchmen, Anglicans, Romanists, Agnostics, Rationalists, or persons generally indifferent to the religious principles advocated by Christian organisations. This view is that the real organic unit of religious life, of which any man is a member, is always the nation to which he belongs, in so far as the nation stands for social and personal ideals and principles. This view makes the Church the unit of religious life; but it identifies the Church with each nation as a society believing in and applying certain standards of civilisation and culture, of duty and responsibility, of right and liberty.

The nation in its capacity as standard-bearer of the ideal may be more or less organised. In the rudimentary stages of national or human evolution, there would be only such primitive beginnings of religious national life that one might hesitate to speak of the nation as a religious unit. And even in highly civilised societies the national consciousness may have thrown off the responsibility of holding up, in any organised manner, personal and civic ideals. In such nations the nation as a church may be as little organised into a unit as is the case in a primi-

tive society ; but nevertheless, although not a religious organisation, the nation would be of the nature of a religious organism. It would constitute the spiritual fluid, so to speak, in one reservoir by means of which all the individuals of the nation and all the private religious groups vitally react upon one another.

It is perfectly consistent with the idea that the nation is the real organic unit, to acknowledge that nations are not absolutely independent of one another. Biology furnishes many examples of living organisms relatively and yet not absolutely independent. So it is with social organisms. But whatever the degree and form of religious thought and organisation characteristic of any nation, it is an undeniable fact that every subject of any nation, from the moment of his birth, is in organic dependence as a religious being upon his own nation as the upholder and inspirer of moral ideas. One may well assert even more. It may well be maintained that not only from the moment of his birth, but as a result of natural and artificial selection through generations before his birth, he is a product of his nation's religious life. Also, in inheriting its present sentiments and tendencies, he is the heir by tradition of its whole past evolution. According to this view every man, whether he likes it or not and whether he knows it or not, is in reality a spiritual member of the nation as a religious whole. He is both a means and an end in the functioning of the nation as the standard-bearer of principles and of aims that do not end in self.

He may belong to no definite religious organisation ; he may hold aloof from all religious meetings ; he may rebel against the fundamental teachings embodied in the creeds established by the State or sanctioned by the ruling classes and by public opinion. Yet his very aloofness

from religious meetings, his very rebellion against current teachings, will be found to be not without their causes and their explanation in the life of the nation as a religious whole. This is possible because the nation may at one and the same time contain and be upholding various ideals not in harmony with themselves. It may also contain trends and tendencies of religious thought and aspiration which have not yet been crystallised into creeds and ceremonies or embodied in any forms. These yet unformulated tendencies will not have been sanctioned dogmatically. Yet they will be active modifying influences, especially upon persons of sensitive spiritual receptivity. A man may boast that he is well rid of religion altogether. He may assert that he has no God and will stoop to no religious practices. Yet in his very act of rebellion he reveals himself to be in vital union with his nation as an organic whole of idealistic aspirations and activities. Even in his protests he is an organ of the nation. Such protests are not irreligious nor are they non-religious ; for every reaction against a conventional standard emanates from a new standard in the making, to be found in the mind of the heretic. If a man for conscience' sake turns against religious teachings and policies prevalent about him, it is because he believes them to be injurious to the nation as a whole and to the citizens as members of the nation. Thus we see that his motive is itself idealistic. He is raising what he believes to be a higher and better standard of manhood and of society.

I have pointed out various classes of persons in England who do not recognise the nation herself as the organic unit of religious life. But it might be well to remember that there is and has been one school of religious thinkers and writers who have valiantly and powerfully maintained

that the nation herself, as a standard-bearer of ideals, is always the real Church. This school maintains that each nation is a church unit. The party or school which regards the nation, in so far as it upholds standards of manhood, as the church, calls itself the Broad Church party. Although the most eminent of its leaders have been active members of the Established Church of England, many persons who for conscience' sake are not communicants within the State organisation are nevertheless Broad Churchmen. Everyone is a Broad Churchman who identifies the Church with the nation itself, so far as the latter is a moral teacher and inspirer.

The doctrine that the nation is always the Church was philosophically advocated at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The same thought was defended and developed by Thomas Arnold, Matthew Arnold, Sir John Seeley, and many others. Dr James Martineau also recognised the nation in its idealism to be the Church. Even John Stuart Mill entertained with sympathy and with enthusiasm Coleridge's idea of what a church is.

Nonconformists in general and nearly all persons who count themselves wholly outside the pale of Christian organisations have been inclined to look upon the Broad Church party as only a faction in the Established Church, and therefore as not possessing a message of interest to them. But in studying the Broad Church movement, we must distinguish between the universal philosophy underlying it and the limited application which some of the Broad Churchmen have made of that philosophy. Some of them have applied it narrowly and in a sectarian spirit. They would perhaps have excluded from the national Church all persons who refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as identical in substance with the Creator of the

universe. They would probably have declared that a national church is inevitably Christo-centric. This illogical and sectarian application has cast discredit upon the Broad Church philosophy in the eyes of Jews, Rationalists, and believers in the religious systems of the East. How could they accept a teaching which declared that the nation is the Church and yet excluded certain individuals who were undoubtedly real and loyal members of the nation? But a philosophy is not to blame if those who advocate it apply it illogically and unjustly. If the nation as the standard-bearer of ideals of civilisation is once acknowledged to be the Church, it is impossible to limit the Church organisation so as to exclude any perceptible trends of idealism that exist within the nation. Even mutually contradictory and opposed ideas and mutually antagonistic tendencies must be acknowledged to be vital parts in the nation's religion. For in fact they do react upon one another in a manner only possible for parts of a living organism. The Church of England as the nation's religious whole does in very fact include Jews, Agnostics, and self-styled Atheists and Freethinkers; and these have influence, if not by favour then by arousing hate and alarm, even within the special ecclesiastical organisations.

Dr Martineau, who was a Broad Churchman, was nevertheless as timid in logic as he was narrow in heart in advocating that the Established Church should only be so far broadened as to include all the orthodox Christian sects and the Unitarians. Theists, according to him, were legitimate and real members of the nation as a living church; but Agnostics, non-theistic Ethicists, Positivists, and Secularists were not.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, however, was as humane and patriotic in his insight as he was profound in his philosophy of religion. He declared that every nation—

including all persons who have caught a gleam of the vision of the ideal—is a church. He even maintained that there were churches before Christianity and that there are churches outside of Christianity. To him the English nation was only by accident of historic evolution, but not in essence, a Christian church. It might discard its Christian theology and its Christ-worship and even its belief in a personal Creator of the universe, and yet, according to Coleridge, it would remain a church because it would be an idealising nation.

Bolder still, however, more elaborate and more discriminating was the Broad Church teaching of Sir John Seeley. In his immortal work entitled *Natural Religion*, he identifies churches with nations quite irrespective of the special doctrines current throughout the nation and unrelated to the degree of organisation which the religious life of the nation has attained. Sir John Seeley maintains that supernaturalism is a merely accidental feature of religion. There are, he says, three types of religion. One is devotion to Science, or the Worship of Truth. Under this heading he includes the grateful recognition of the law of cause and effect throughout the phenomena of nature, the loyal search for the underlying unities in special classes of events or for the supreme unity which combines all phenomena into one cosmos. This devotion to science is a religion. But Seeley recognises as equally important Devotion to the Beautiful. Above these two, however, he places as the supreme religion Reverence for the Ideals of Righteousness. Religion, then, in the historic sense has always consisted of national life in so far as that national life has acted in accordance with and been inspired by principles of science, art and morality, and has searched for ever deeper insight into these principles.

Sir John Seeley advocated these principles with the courage of a worshipper of Truth and with an originality and insight which place him among the world's greatest statesmen and constructive thinkers. However antagonistic his teachings are to the prevalent notions of those who count themselves the official leaders of the Church of England, he was to the end of his life a devout and enthusiastic member and champion of the existing establishment. He hoped and expected that it would be gradually transformed from within along the lines prescribed by the philosophic conception of the Church as the spiritual organism of the nation.

I would especially ask my readers not to forget that the philosophy of religion and of the Church advocated in this book has found most eloquent and profound adherents within the Established Church itself. Let no one fall into the error of thinking that mine is a philosophy originated by those outside the Church and at heart hostile to it. Of non-communicants, only those entertain this peculiar philosophy who are outside not from preference or hostility but simply for conscience' sake — being "church-outed" by the blindness and prejudice which identifies religion with supernaturalism.

The religious philosophy of National Idealism is one well worthy the consideration of every lover of the historic Church, because it is a practical and fruit-bearing philosophy. It makes all the difference in the world whether a man regards himself as constituting a church unto himself or regards his sect as the unit to which he belongs, or the international historic Church in all its branches, or whether he looks upon his nation as his Church. The patriotism of those who identify their nation with their Church becomes transformed into religious vision and purified by religious enthusiasm. The patriotism of

such religion becomes identical with that of the chief Hebrew prophets, who counted that the prosperity of their nation consisted not in wealth or fame, but in obedience to the principles of social justice and in service to all mankind.

The philosophy of religious nationalism is the one principle which can break down the schism that now divides the people of England into State churchmen and free churchmen, into Establishment and Nonconformity. The principle of religious nationalism alone can draw the working people again into the Church and bring back the Church to its primitive power of inspiring the poor and the outcast with hope for this life. If Coleridge's philosophy of the Church should spread among the Nonconformists of England, it would revolutionise their whole policy. If the intellectual classes of England, the tens of thousands who on critical and scientific grounds hold aloof from active participation in church life, could be induced to become familiar with the teaching of Sir John Seeley, they would adopt it. As a consequence, the intellectual classes would become leaders in the new movement within the Church for its nationalisation. They now keep their religious convictions to themselves as a private possession, although these convictions are wholly in harmony with the true philosophy of the Church. In the light of Seeley's principles the holding aloof from church membership and suppressing one's own ideas is not only a deplorable blunder, because it means spiritual suicide, for oneself; it is an unpatriotic neglect of the supreme civic duty. It has caused untold mischief to the highest life of the nation, injuring its spiritual unity by handing over religion to the narrow-minded, the fanatical and the unsympathetic. Once converted to the idea of the nation as the actual and ideal Church from

which they cannot and ought not to escape, tens of thousands of silent, scattered, and therefore comparatively powerless thinkers would find themselves irresistibly drawn again into religious communion. They would, however, besides participating in the general religious life of the nation, form themselves into a distinct party for the promulgation of the true philosophy of a national church. They would not cease their efforts at propaganda until the nation as a whole had been converted to it.

Imagine for a moment how different would be the state of social life and thought in England to-day, if the religious philosophy of National Idealism had been known and acted upon three centuries ago by the reforming enthusiasts of England! The Nonconformists within the Church would never have acquiesced for a day in their final expulsion from the established organisation. They never would have rested content with the idea of private-enterprise churches. They would have resented the idea of free churches. Instead of their infinite solicitude to save separate souls from eternal torment by gathering them into isolated conventicles, they would have continued to agitate as a great political force for the recognition of their teachings within the Establishment. They would have opposed the mad and tyrannical notion that there must be monotony and uniformity, intellectual and ceremonial, within the State Church. They would have sent representatives to the House of Commons with the express object not of disestablishing but of democratising and ethicising the Established Church. Thus they would have thrown supernaturalism, the Prayer Book, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Creeds, episcopacy, sacrificial priestcraft, and all other traditions into the crucible of political and party strife. They would have seen, as John Milton saw, that it is a sign not of weak-

ness but of religious fervour when discussion and difference of opinion are rife and free to express themselves. They are the enemies of personal religion who magnify and praise outward conformity and uniformity instead of free expression of individual insight and originality. Had the notion prevailed that the nation in its higher life is the Church, everyone would have resented as insolence the pretensions of those who would shut any man of earnest faith out of the established organisation of religion. Had the religious philosophy of Coleridge prevailed among Unitarians they would never have consented to subside into intellectual chapelism. They would have worked day and night for a Unitarian Inclusion Act.

But in order that the significance of church discipline as the immediate source of personal insight and enthusiasm may be appreciated in its fullest scope, it is necessary to consider the relation of the Church not simply to the nation as an unorganised society, but to the State as the nation organised and acting with sovereign power through its government.

I have been pleading for ecclesiastical organisation, and not simply for the influence of unorganised religious life upon the individual. But when we pass to consider ecclesiastical organisation upon a national basis we are confronted with the idea of the State. For, as I have said, the State is the nation organised and acting with sovereign power through its government. Accordingly, when fully organised, a National Church becomes a State Church.

## CHAPTER II

### NATIONAL RELIGION AND A STATE CHURCH

A NATIONAL church might exist where there was no State church. There might be but one religious organisation throughout the nation, and that a purely voluntary one. Of course, this would only be possible where all the members of the nation were either of one mind in regard to religious doctrines and methods, or else were so completely converted to the principle of voluntary co-operation among persons and groups differing in religious beliefs that no individuals and no groups wished to remain unconnected with others.

But, even if there were not one voluntary organisation embracing all separate religious groups, still, anyone who realised the sociological facts of the case would see that, despite the aloofnesses and antagonisms of various religious bodies, they did at least to a marked degree react upon and colour one another's character, ideas, and methods. Just as we speak of English art, although there is neither a State nor a voluntary organisation of all the art interests of England, so we might speak of English religion. It is apparent in regard to art that, so long as its purposes and technique and ideals are unorganised, English art as such can scarcely be developed and differentiated beyond the most rudimentary stages. Any

idealistic interest, if we take the point of view of the nation as a whole, must be terribly handicapped by being left exclusively to individual effort and to private co-operative enterprise. It is hard to believe that in any such interest the nation's unity can at any time have advanced far beyond the degree to which there has been established a systematic organisation of all the forces involved.

While it is true that a national Church may exist where there is no State Church, the converse is equally and perhaps more significantly true. There may be a State Church highly organised, centralised and powerful, and yet it may not be a national Church. There may at the same time be a national Church, but that may exist only in a most elementary and amorphous condition. Nay, more: a highly centralised, powerful, and rich State Church may itself be one of the chief causes preventing the growth either of a voluntary national Church or of a truly national State Church. Such is the condition in England. The State Church is not national. There is a national Church (because there is a nation), but it is wholly rudimentary. The reason why the national Church is in such a backward stage of development is chiefly because at present the State Church retards the process of unification of religious life throughout the nation. This condition of affairs can be denied by no one. Those who believe in the existing Establishment deplore that it has not been able to unify the nation, offending one-third and never touching another third. Those who protest altogether against a State institution of religion naturally express a similar regret.

But, whatever relationship an existing State Church holds to the religious life of the nation, it nevertheless is always a part of the nation as a Church. It may refuse

to recognise as churches any of the other groups of worshippers. It may offend the self-respect of all such. It may be the irritating cause of civil strife. Still no differences between it and other groups can be such solid barriers as to prevent the transmission of ideas, enthusiasms and purposes. The barriers between the different sects in a nation or between free churches and a State Establishment are, so to speak, porous. The spiritual fluid passes through these walls, conveying from the one to the other a certain amount of the quality and colour of each.

The theory that a nation, in so far as it reverences ideals, is a church, does not in the least overlook the fact that there may be violent party strife between various religious groups. Nor does it even involve a disparagement or condemnation of such strife. A nation does not lose its unity in religion because of theological controversies, any more than it ceases to be a unit in civil life because of the antagonisms of various political parties. On the contrary, the true idea of a nation as a church, instead of favouring the suppression of religious differences and their discussion and of the organising of new groups to advance new ideas, recognises that ultimate harmony and real uniformity of belief and deep inward identity of insight and aspiration can never arise throughout any nation except as the result of the freest, boldest, and most organised expression and propaganda of every fresh sentiment. It is only by means of a struggle for existence among competing standards and principles of personal and social life, it is only by experience and experiment, by trial and test, that a people can ever become able to select those ideas and standards which will really best serve the life of the nation as a spiritual organism. So patent to many has become the beneficial effect of religious freedom and the liberty to organise and

convert others, that before many decades the priests and preachers of religion will be sure to accept discussions, debates and arguments, to be followed up by plebiscites, as legitimate instruments of religious purification and inspiration ; they will count these devices equally sacred with private prayer and meetings for worship and praise. Only by the friction of sincere intellect with intellect, the clash of devout character with character, can a whole nation ever come to see and rightly value righteousness, beauty, and truth.

When once the idea of the nation as the organic unit of religious life becomes prevalent, sectarian aloofness will no longer exist. Sects will cease to be sects. Each one of them will become a recognised party among the many within the national Church. Now, the peculiarity of a party as distinct from a sect is that it never withdraws or stands aloof. For that would be its death. But it sallies forth and presses forward in order to grapple and wrestle with opposing parties. The policy and the philosophy of parties is always that they must meet face to face and contend—bitterly if you will, but not violating the laws of the game.

It must further be remembered that parties are always understood to be but sections of a whole, and each party is seeking to draw the substance and materials of others into itself. As an actual fact, parties are not fixed quantities, nor are they regarded as such. The elements of one, thanks to the intimacy of contact in struggle, pass over continually to another. Indeed, the whole method of government by majority is based upon the evident fact that parties modify one another, and that each is influenced by the forces of opposition as well as by its own doctrines and its own leaders. The philosophy of government by majorities is due to the experience that

what was a majority yesterday may become to-morrow a minority, and *vice versâ*. These facts in civil politics are familiar enough. But it sounds strangely odd to suggest that in the same way religious sects should be forced to enter or should voluntarily enter into just such co-operative antagonism. When they do, difference of religious belief will not bring about narrowness and bigotry and a misunderstanding and depreciation of others. Theological hatred has been the worst of all hatred—not because it was theological, but because religious groups were sects, each counting itself an organic unit of religious life instead of reverently recognising the nation as the vital unit of spiritual activity.

Luckily, even under the prevalent aloofness, although the fact is generally overlooked, there has existed an intercommunication and exchange of spiritual benefits. Although the sects are blind to the process, the nation as the Church has been all the time redeeming them. And the least bigoted, the most spiritually cultivated, of the leaders of each sect have received and acknowledged religious help from the leaders of other sects. But what is still more encouraging, the thousands upon thousands of Englishmen who are not active, enthusiastic members of any one religious body or of the Establishment, are proud of the great leaders of every denomination and of the Church, and claim these men as their own, and derive religious instruction and inspiration from them despite sectarian barriers. John Henry Newman belonged not simply first to the Anglicans and then to the Roman Catholics, but to all of us. So was it with Manning. James Martineau—what did it matter to the most of us whether he had been more or less identified with the Unitarians? As a nation, we are all vitally and spiritually members one of another. Yet it cannot

be denied that each man's benefit from every religious group in the nation has been infinitesimal compared to what it would have been had the philosophy of Church nationalism been universally understood and accepted.

To sum up my argument thus far. England is not as yet in the fullest sense an organic unit of religious life. But as she becomes more unified in religion, her religious life will be correspondingly developed. And, as her religious consciousness develops, she will require and secure national unity in the same proportion. England contains all the potentialities of a national Church. And in moments of great moral crisis she has already acted as a religious unit.

The next step in my argument is that a nation, in order to become completely an individual whole of spiritual life, must be organised systematically, with foresight, by effort and with sacrifice on the part of religious leaders. Otherwise her spiritual forces remain in a state of relative anarchy and chaos, often nullifying and destroying one another, to the suffering, moral detriment and enervation of the whole people.

It is not generally realised that a mechanical organisation, brought about by effort and agitation, must in human society precede full and spontaneous harmony and happy, vital interaction of interests. In the animal world there is no such thing as mechanical organisation, planned beforehand and only perfected after many failures. In biology we see no organisations, but only organisms. Since, therefore, in sociology we have learned to use the biological method, we have fallen into the error of imagining that somehow human society will develop spontaneously and vitally, without effort, without machinery, without mechanical design. This, however, is a colossal and lamentable blunder. In human society,

so far as anyone has ever been able to observe the sequences of growth and advancement, mechanical and halting effort precedes organic spontaneity. Mechanical effort, tentative enterprise, is the vital power, if one may use a phrase wholly unscientific, in every upward evolution of man. Where there is no such enterprise there is no process of development from the incoherent and homogeneous to a unified whole of differentiated and co-operating members. Although this is the fact in every department of human progress, it finds special illustration in the growth of a nation's religious life. To make the national Church a perfected body instead of leaving it an indefinite mass of spiritual matter, we must politically force into contact the now isolated and self-satisfied, not to say self-deifying, sects, so that no one of them shall escape the cleansing, broadening, and strengthening effect of intimate contact with all others and with the nation as a whole.

This is another way of saying that in the interest of England as ideally an organic unit of religious life, there is need of the organisation of that religious life by the State. In short, every nation, to become fully a spiritual organism, requires a State Church as an instrument for providing avenues of intercommunication, nerve-centres and organs to function in the interest of the whole.

The superiority, as a national asset, of a State Church in contradistinction to free churches has been obscured from view by the anti-democratic and the supernaturalistic theories which have prevailed. A future chapter of this book will be devoted to the consideration of democracy as a guiding principle in the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Other chapters will be devoted to the principles of idealistic humanism in relation to the concrete problems of religion. Here, therefore, I need not

expand in full the idea either of democracy or of constructive humanism. But it is necessary to dwell somewhat at length upon the anti-democratic and supernaturalistic beliefs which have prevented a clear understanding of the functions of a State Church in relation to the nation's life as a whole.

As regards the anti-democratic character of the existing establishment. History has not as yet furnished any instance of a democratic State Church. Accordingly, in proportion as sentiments of liberty and equality have grown, the State Church has fallen under condemnation. Yet oligarchic government is no more essential to a church than it is to the civil State. As States have been transformed during the last few centuries from oligarchies or even autocracies into governments by the people without ceasing to be States, so State Churches might be rid of every vestige of oligarchic control and still remain State Churches. It is wholly unjustifiable to reason that because State Churches have had evil effects in the past, and do have in the present, they are to be condemned as such, and free churches set up in their place. For the evil effects may have been due not to establishment, but to that old-fashioned order of government from above down which is being gradually superseded in all other departments of national organisation. There is every reason to believe that if once the Established Church were converted into a democracy as regards its form of government, many effects would issue the opposite of those which have followed in the trail of oligarchic ecclesiastical polity. In the civil State, such opposite effects have proceeded from the introduction of democratic government. It is only the religion of the nation which thus far has remained practically untouched by the democratic revolution of modern times. In it alone oligarchic methods

of administration, control by a few and anti-democratic prejudices and principles, have to this hour retained their hold within the nation. The cause of nearly all the difficulty in the religious life of England to-day is that the advantages and prestige of State authority and State efficiency still uphold anti-democratic teachings in religion and anti-democratic methods of Church organisation.

But, again I repeat, it is wholly unjust to blame establishment for a defect which can be removed without disestablishment. The Establishment can be democratised. One might as well argue against democratic legislation in regard to land, by which the land would be thrown open to the people, because it was anti-democratic legislation which enclosed the land away from the people. Indeed, such is the argument of the Anarchists. Because they hate anti-democratic land legislation they will hear no more of any kind of legislation whatsoever. Yet it is to be hoped that democratic opponents of the Established Church have not gone so far in their conscious acceptation of anarchy but that they will discard such reasoning when they once realise its presupposition to be that all political government is an evil. To most of us it is perfectly clear that the cause of the fault in our present land laws is not to be found in their having been State-made, but in their having been devised by and in the interests of a small class in the community. So in the domain of religion : it must first be proved that any defects in it are not traceable to class rule, before they can be attributed to establishment as such. It must be first proved that they could not be remedied by free discussion and universal suffrage, before anyone has a right to the conclusion that the only remedy is disestablishment.

I have implied that to democratise the State Church would make it national and lead to the transformation of

the nation into an organic unit of religious life. A knowledge of the mental and moral effects gradually produced by democratic machinery in other departments of national interest leads me to believe that the introduction of the same kind of machinery into the government of the Established Church would produce in the end only the most beneficent results both upon the creeds and forms of religion and upon the character, the moral judgment, and the religious insight and enthusiasm of the people as a whole.

What would be the effect of manhood and womanhood suffrage—to take democracy in its fullest form—on all questions of creed, ceremonial and morality? In asking this question we must, of course, have in mind not simply the effect after the first five years or even after the first decade, but after a generation and after a century. For often the first effects of any innovation are the very opposite of its ultimate trend.

In trying to find what are the general effects of democratic machinery, it will be agreed that we could not take a fairer guide than Mr Walter Bagehot. He was by no means a democrat. Yet no one has ever made a more penetrating analysis than he of the mental energies which generate those forms of government by which the people ultimately control. Nor has anyone ever shown deeper insight into the mental energies which such forms of government in turn generate. Although he was not a democrat, his account of the mental activities which both form and are formed by democratic machinery glows with enthusiasm for the beneficent influence which democracy exercises over every person who vitally participates either in its causes or in its effects. His analysis is searching and exact. But let those not read it who wish to escape conversion to the principles of democracy.

Mr Bagehot counts England far superior in culture and character to America. But his judgment as to the causes of this superiority is the very opposite of that generally held. He maintains that England is in her machinery and her political functioning more democratic than America. He carefully contrasts the constitutional form which so-called government-by-the-people has received in America with that which it has assumed in England. His conclusions are paradoxical in the extreme. He traces the great evils of American political life not, as is generally done, to the democratic, but to the anti-democratic machinery which the founders of the United States introduced in order to check the full, free, and rapid expression of the popular will. The paper Constitution of America was from the first founded on the dread of popular fickleness and blindness. It is generally supposed that, while England is more aristocratic in form of government, she is more democratic in spirit than America. But, according to Mr Bagehot, her forms also are more democratic. And if her spirit is likewise so, it is because of the peculiarity in her governmental arrangement which incessantly manufactures democratic intelligence and the democratic spirit. American governmental machinery, on the other hand, instead of stimulating, does in many particulars discourage keenness of political interest and insight and lessen political scope and opportunity. Nobody denies that in England the will of the people more easily organises itself and controls legislation and administration than in America. But most persons attribute this to some unaccountable and glorious, some uncaused common sense and genius of the British public. Bagehot thought that England is more democratic in temper and habit because her governmental machinery not only offers less check to

the popular mind after it has been formed, but beforehand actually fosters, vitalises and stimulates, as well as educates, public thought and character. The peculiarity in England's constitution which, according to Bagehot, has these beneficent effects, is the device of government by a special Committee of the House of Commons. This device is one which is imitated a thousandfold in many legislative bodies less sovereign and comprehensive than the lower House of Parliament. Everywhere it is government by Cabinet, by a special Committee of a larger representative body popularly elected. This device in the first place was generated by the mental dynamics which we call democracy, and has ever since been generating them after their own kind. What government by Cabinet is, I must assume that my reader already knows. If he be not acquainted with it, Mr Bagehot's book on *The English Constitution* is easily procurable. I will in elucidation quote only two passages, themselves condensed by omission of irrelevant particulars. "The House is an electoral Chamber; it is an assembly which chooses our president. . . . But because the House of Commons has a power of dismissal in addition to the power of election, its relations to the Premier are incessant. They guide him, and he leads them. He is to them what they are to the nation. . . . The Cabinet is a Committee which can dissolve the assembly which appointed it. It is a Committee with a power of appeal. It is a creature, but has the power of destroying its creators. It is an executive which can annihilate the legislature, as well as an executive which is a nominee of the legislature." "Cabinet government educates the nation. The great scene of debate, the great engine of popular instruction and political controversy, is the legislative body. A speech there, by an eminent statesman, a party movement by a great

political combination, are the best means yet known for arousing, enlivening, and teaching a people. The Cabinet system ensures debates, for it makes them the means by which statesmen advertise themselves for future, and confirm themselves in present, governments. The nation is forced to hear both sides. . . . And it likes to hear—it is eager to know. Human nature despises long arguments which come to nothing. . . . But all men heed great results, and a change of Government is a great result."

Then Mr Bagehot proceeds to contrast such executive by a Committee of the House of Commons with the American system of executive by a President, who, although his whole policy may fail to receive the backing of Congress, remains secure in office until the end of his appointed term. The result of this system is that Americans have no motive to attend continually and thoughtfully to politics. "Under a presidential government a nation has, except at the electing moment, no influence; it has not a ballot-box before it; it is not incited to form an opinion like a nation under a Cabinet government; nor is it instructed like such a nation. There are doubtless debates in the legislature, but they are prologues without a play. . . . The prize of power is not in the gift of the legislature, and no one cares for the legislature. . . . No presidential country needs to form daily delicate opinions, or is helped in forming them. . . . The same difficulty oppresses the Press which oppresses the legislature. It can *do nothing*. . . . The papers are not so good as the English, because they have not the same motive to be good as the English papers. . . . Unless a member of the legislature be sure of something more than a speech, unless he be incited by the hope of action and chastened by the chance

of responsibility, a first-rate man will not care to take the place, and will not do much if he does take it. . . . The principle of popular government is that the supreme power . . . . resides in the people—not necessarily or commonly in the whole people, in the numerical majority ; but in a chosen people, a picked and selected people. Under a Cabinet constitution at a sudden emergency this people can choose a ruler for the occasion ; . . . . but under a presidential government you can do nothing of the kind. American government calls itself a government by the supreme people ; but at a quick crisis, a time when a sovereign power is most needed, you cannot *find* the supreme people ; . . . . all the arrangements are for *stated* times. There is no elastic element. . . . You have bespoken your Government in advance, and whether it suits you or not, whether it works well or ill, whether it is what you want or not, by law you must have it."

Do not these quotations confirm my statement that Mr Bagehot's account of the democratic machinery of Cabinet government glows with enthusiasm and admiration, and is as democratic in spirit as it is precise in style ? It must be conceded, however, that his picture of English government is idealised. At least, it pictures how things tend to operate instead of how they actually proceed. He describes how it would be in England if there were no counteracting effects of prejudice and tradition and if there were not great numbers who cannot even yet vote or intelligently follow the proceedings of debate in the House of Commons. Likewise his delineation of the political dynamics of American government, although not an exaggeration, is a demarcation of what would take place if tendencies now often checked were permitted full play.

But the principle of democracy would work beneficently in a wider field than Mr Bagehot was surveying.

Government by Cabinet as a means, at a quick crisis when sovereign power is most needed, of finding the supreme people would be just as stimulating and educative when the religious sentiments of the people were in question and the spiritual interests of the Church at stake, as when the problem before the country was one of Home Rule in Ireland or war in South Africa or Free Trade. At present there is available no organised means of finding out what the people of England do think in religion. There never has been any such means. The result is that the people in general do not think on the ultimate problems of life beyond the capacity of a nation of infants. A still more immediately injurious effect is that the religious life is dominated by irresponsible leaders. The present ecclesiastical government of England does not educate the nation to think or act for itself on the deep issues of time and eternity. When religion is at stake there is no such great scene of debate as Mr Bagehot pictures the House of Commons. There is lacking an automatic engine which would educate through responsible controversy. Statesmen of the Church need not advertise themselves for future or confirm themselves in present emoluments by presenting their policies and purposes to the judgment and finally the vote of any representative assembly. The nation is by no means forced to hear both sides. Not even one side need the ecclesiastical powers-that-be submit to the nation. It does not hear, nor does it like to hear, nor is it eager to know, any of the reasons or the prejudices in favour of the creeds or ceremonies imposed upon it. That tendency in human nature which despises long arguments that come to nothing is never fretted by the anti-

democratic government of the Established Church. The Church forces nobody to hear any arguments. It brands as heresy the curiosity which would care to reconsider the foundations of belief. It is true all men heed great results, and a change of government is a great result; but now no changes of government of the Church of England ever take place on account of any change of policy or principle, or on account of any protest issuing from the people.

Mr Bagehot lauds government by a special Committee of the House of Commons as compared with the American system of presidential government and fixed tenure of office. But had he compared government by a special Committee of the House of Commons with the present government of the Church of England—had not other considerations checked him—his expressions of admiration for the Cabinet system would have exceeded all bounds of temperate speech. For the American President at least is elected once in four years; but in what way can it be said that the Archbishops of England are ever compelled to appeal to the country for approval? It is true that in America, only once in four years does debate lead to a vote, and therefore in the intervening period debate is more or less futile. But how could any discussion on fundamental religious problems, either as regards creeds or ceremonial, be anything but futile at present? How could it mean business? How could it at present become the prologue to any sort of dramatic action? How would it lead to a change in church government? The people of England are never consulted on religious issues; consequently they never trouble to discuss in earnest the problems of religion. If they did discuss them, the controversy would be futile and not sobered by the anticipation of responsible decision. Mr Bagehot says that in America there is no elastic element. One would

fear that the moral judgment of the people of England on religious questions must by now have lost any capacity of elasticity which it might originally have possessed. England bespeaks her ecclesiastical government, often not four, but fourteen, or forty years ahead, according to the accidental elongation of the individual lives of archbishops, bishops, and the like.

Mr Bagehot, in the spirit shown by the passages I have cited, proceeds to trace all the corruptions of political life in America—the venality of the American Press, the aloofness of the best citizens—to the anti-democratic devices of the written Constitution of the country. America is rendered dull and inelastic by fixed terms of office for the executive and by an executive independent of the legislative body. On the other hand, according to our admirable guide in the comparative study of constitutional government, the life, the spirit, the sense of responsibility, and the keen intellectual interest in public concerns of the voters of England, are due to England's ultra-democratic fusion of executive and legislature, and her dissolution and appeal at the moment of every great crisis. He is thinking, however, only of England's life outside of religion. In the highest matters, in the chief concernments of humanity, England knows nothing of appeal to the people—least of all at the moment of a great crisis. And she never has known it. The very thought of dissolution of her executive and legislative ecclesiastical bodies would paralyse with terror, if not madden to violence, those who count themselves the appointed guardians of her spiritual life.

Yet Mr Bagehot leads his reader straight to the conclusion that a form of government so beneficent in secular concerns could not but prove itself an instrument of renovation and rejuvenation in sacred interests. The

form of government, he says, which is most helpful is one where the supreme power resides in the people ; if not the whole people or a majority, then in a picked and selected people, but at least a people as distinct from the elected governors. It is a government in which the sovereign people sensitively and continuously makes itself felt. Such a mechanism he presents as a perpetual generator and preserver of civic virtue. For it provides a motive, he maintains, for restraining the passions and for strenuous exertion of thought. It is democratic machinery of government which regulates as well as stimulates debate. It transforms talk from an irresponsible wagging of tongues into an earnest wrestling of wills and into a contest of intellects. It is democracy which invests political discussions with the dignity of deeds. Democracy is the one form of government which can and does beget intelligence and virtue in the millions. It is the one form which provides a motive for being intelligent and virtuous. On the other hand, every anti-democratic or undemocratic arrangement is equivalent to a deadening force brought to bear against the rational and moral nature of the many. Undemocratic machinery of government closes off from the generality of men a field where their moral reason would find beneficial exercise if not thus mechanically prohibited.

We see, then, that any governmental organisation which is not democratic, although it may possess other advantages, cannot manifest the power of generating civic virtue and intelligence. It cannot perform what I have said should be the main function of religious organisation—transform the nation into an organic unit of spiritual life. Mr Bagehot's analysis of democracy leads us to believe that it is a form of government which, if applied to the Church, would transform society into a spiritual organism. For it

alone, we have seen, would allow every moral personality recognised by the State to become at the same time both a means and end of the Church, as are the physical members in any healthy living body. Democracy alone can distribute the thought, foresight, enthusiasm, and self-control of all to each and each to all. But could any effect be more germane than this to the real nature of religion and of the Church? One can conceive that an anti-democratic form of government might be not wholly incompatible with the ends of the State in so far as it is a military power or a police force. But in so far as the nation is a church, it must be more injured by anti-democratic machinery than any other social institution would be, for the Church is spiritual, and spirituality means thought, foresight, enthusiasm, and self-control. Any other form of government—*i.e.*, any rule by one, or by a few, or from above down, without consent of the many—may put in claims along other lines; but here it stands for ever condemned, because in its very nature it involves the moral pauperisation of the many. It does for them what in their very nature as spiritual beings they ought to do and ought to be allowed to do for themselves. Un-democratic forms of government may provide the people with creature-comforts, but even in so doing would rob them of their moral dignity. Only a conferring of conscious sovereignty in the government of the Church upon the masses of the people can communicate to the people the virtues which the Church exists to generate and foster.

In her anti-democratic machinery of government we find an adequate cause of the spiritual failure of the Established Church. The democratisation of the Establishment would produce the same kind of an effect upon the Church as it has produced upon every other institution which has been subjected to it—a vitalising effect.

I have been attempting to show that the principles of democracy are not incompatible with the character and the needs of a State Church, but on the contrary that the application of them to a State Church is the only possible means of bringing the whole nation's spiritual life into organic unity. I have sought to combat the notion that democracy and a State Church are incompatible in principle ; but, now, I wish further to show that instead of such being the case, democracy is diametrically opposed to free-churchism. Free churches are in their very nature undemocratic in method, in machinery and principle, however much the democratic spirit may have animated the revolt against the State Church. For no little group of persons merely by virtue of representative government within itself can be properly designated as democratic. A group of persons as compared with a whole nation is always but a few, and government of a few by that same few does not constitute democracy, for that little group is always in vital touch with the whole nation, and relatively to that it is a clique, a caste. A private organisation, for religion as for any other end, may adopt within itself universal suffrage and may manage its affairs by a committee elected annually, and not only constantly called to account but continually at liberty to dissolve itself and appeal to the whole body of its voters ; but still such an organisation will not be a democracy. The more it imitates democratic forms and methods, the more grotesque and preposterous it becomes as a counterfeit. Democracy is a form of government of a nation only ; the thing governed must always be a whole people and can never be a class or self-segregated minority or even a majority of a nation. Every private church, like every other private corporation, excludes from itself, or in the nature of things has not drawn into itself, the forces of

opposition. The disbelievers in Methodism are not found inside of Wesley's organisations. They are not subject to the government of the Methodist churches. The like is true equally of the Congregational bodies. Were they in reality democratic, Congregational societies would grant privileges of at least ordinary membership to High Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Jews, and Unitarians. If you look to England as a state, you find that such exactly is its peculiarity, on account of its government being that of a whole nation. The Opposition even sits in the House of Commons face to face with the Government, in full expectancy of one day ousting and replacing the present Government. The Opposition represents conflicting ideals and principles. But in each of the various sects of England, by the very nature of the basis of admission to its membership, any opposition of a thorough and radical kind is precluded at the very start. Banish the Opposition continually from the nation and the government of England ceases to be democratic. All free churches have barred out those who do not swear allegiance to certain doctrines, formulæ, or forms. The result is that the moment a person sets up opposition he is driven out as a heretic. Is that compatible with democracy? The truth is that a little group from among the vast population of a nation, created for a particular end on a particular intellectual foundation, excludes its opposite and thus becomes inevitably a class, a school, and—in so far as it has power in the community round about it—an oligarchy and a would-be aristocracy. The members of every free church as individuals are without doubt spiritually living in great part upon the outside public. What are they, then, but a clique? And what does it profit us from the point of view of democracy that a clique should recognise all its members as peers?

Or, to put the argument in other words, an aristocracy practising within its own limits liberty and equality and fraternity does not on that account become a democracy. The principle I am advocating is that the basis of democracy is always territorial and recognises as part of itself, irrespective of differences of thought and belief, all moral agents living within its own geographical area. Now this is exactly what a free church never does. But it is what, to a greater extent, even an oligarchic State Church does. In principle at least, every citizen of the State within a given area is by virtue of his citizenship a member of the Church of England. Free churches never even make a pretence to any such catholicity. How, then, can they continue their claim to be more democratic than the Establishment?

Democracy carried out logically does, as I have indicated, recognise the membership of every moral agency within its geographical area. In this sense it is the government by all of all for all, without any preliminary division of sheep from goats, and without any mental reservation by which the word "all" can be applied to the few who are labelled "sheep." Is not the logic inexorable by which one is led to declare that no machinery for the control of a few in a fixed territory by that same few can destroy the fact that the few are not all? In a church organised on a truly democratic basis, whether it called itself a State Church or not, every living soul within the area, despite his heresies or indifferences, would be privileged as a voter, and would be welcomed in discussion and into leadership. In the civil government of England, in so far as it is democratic, no one dreams of excluding from civic and political rights and advantages any minority or any individual. When we consider the application of the

principles of democracy to church government, we must always take the national point of view and keep in mind the people—the whole people of England. Then it will become as plain as day that no free or voluntary church organisation is democratic. To argue that it is involves a self-contradiction. Furthermore, it is impossible for a moment to believe that government of a self-selected minority of the nation by that minority will in its effect, either upon the members of the minority itself or upon the community at large, illustrate and exemplify the effects which the government of a whole people by a whole people would produce. There is no ground for thinking that the beneficent influences, which Mr Bagehot traces to government by special committee of a legislature elected by all the people within the whole territorial area of the nation, would come into operation, or have ever come into operation, in a free congregational society.

It is true that such a society does have influence upon the nation at large, because it is a part of the whole, but its influence upon the surrounding community would be the same even if it were autocratically governed within itself by one man. Indeed, in the Methodist organisation, until the death of Wesley, there was the extremest autocratic government. At his death it became aristocratic or episcopal. There have been splits among the Methodists in protest against the undemocratic machinery of Methodist episcopalianism. But as regards the world at large, these petty differences of domestic government within a sect have no meaning whatever. Indeed, a person might be a perfectly consistent democrat, he might believe that a nation should be organised governmentally by such mechanical devices as would most readily find and stimulate the sovereign people to statesmanlike judgment and decision ; and yet, seeing that a private

enterprise never can be a democracy, he might favour autocratic or oligarchic government as more suitable to such societies.

But while the government of private organisations is a matter of indifference to the general democratic public, the mistaken belief that such private societies are democratic is a thing which the public ought to do its utmost to remove. Democracy falls into disrepute if petty sects, which never can be so, parade themselves as democratic. All their failures, all their objectionable characteristics, are then set down to the discredit of democracy. Yet these are all due to the original principle of exclusiveness upon which a so-called free church is founded. The sects drive out, if by mistake they have admitted, any heretics, or anyone who after admission turns heretical. Thus they extinguish in its germ every process of internal development and transformation. By such undemocratic exclusion and ejection of heretics, private-enterprise churches remain from generation to generation well-nigh unchanged. They outlive by centuries the vital relation to the times which originally caused them. How unlike in this respect is the life of a free church to the life of a whole nation, either as a church or as a civic body! Nations, at least in proportion as they are democratic, do not attempt to exclude or suppress geniuses. These geniuses, remaining within the nation, whatever turmoil they stir up for a time, in the end react upon the nation's life and are recognised of it. Free churches, however, are noted for being founded by geniuses, but never themselves generously welcoming the innovations of any genius and providing scope for new prophets. In other words, the fundamental difference between private enterprise and State democracy (and there is no other democracy) is that in

the latter the most original brains neither expatriate themselves nor are suppressed.

Under one condition, however, even a private or free church may claim to be democratic. That condition is that, whatever its own internal government may be, it should advocate national State democracy in the organisation of religion. Then, however, a free church becomes something more than a dissenting body or a private enterprise. It becomes a Party, as I have indicated before, in the national Church. By advocating a democratic national State Church it becomes outward-looking, aggressive; it enters into vital, although antagonistic, contact with the outside world, with the heretics. This touch with the nation's life is vivifying. Probably any one sect thus transforming itself into an ecclesiastical party would learn from the world round about it more than it could teach. It would gather up in itself much of the nation's wisdom and the nation's character, and send forth again that same wisdom and character after they had become assimilated to itself. Were a free church to hate and try to end its own independence and isolation and seek to bring about the ultimate union of all organisations of religious life, it would then deserve to be recognised, by virtue of its hope and effort though not by its own nature, as a democratic body. It would, moreover, by its activity as an aggressive party in the nation's life, acquire many of the virtues of a real democracy.

The preposterous notion that the Free Church movement in England is democratic has evidently sprung out of the individualistic psychology and sociology of the eighteenth century. According to this psychology, when two or three persons gather together and organise themselves by majority vote they forthwith become democratic. This individualistic psychology regards

each individual person as the real unit, and any society, whether of the sovereign State or in private enterprise, as but a voluntary aggregate of separate atoms. Such a philosophy cannot, by the very make-up of the word "democracy," be designated by this term. From the point of view of history, etymology, and sociology, the real unit of democracy is a whole nation and not a voluntary group of individuals. Or, if the term cannot be thus limited after its long use in a wider sense, we must discriminate between individualistic democracy and social democracy. No one will deny that what I have been affirming does at least hold true of social democracy.

From the point of view of social democracy, the moment a religious body ceases to be based on geographical territory and to comprehend the whole nation, it has already ceased to be democratic. Here is not merely a quibbling with terms. What I mean is, that the moment a church founds itself on a non-territorial basis and receives into membership only a select class of the nation's citizens, it cuts the artery that would supply it with life-blood. It becomes inevitably anæmic, impotent, and, as compared with national sanity, of unsound judgment. If within itself it introduces democratic devices it becomes a caricature of the original which it copies, resembling the original in meaningless accidental and external details, but remaining altogether unlike it in vitality, virility, originality, and resource.

Only in one aspect can free churches justify their claim to be democratic. Only in one effect do they resemble State democracy. In this one effect they have rendered incalculable service to England. They have prepared and trained their members in the forms of democratic government so as to render their members more efficient

in the real democratic management of the nation round about them. Private enterprises, adopting universal suffrage and representative government within themselves, have been, if nothing else, preparatory schools in general government by the people. Whatever strictures, therefore, I may have been bringing against them, must not be regarded as casting any disparagement upon the immense services they have rendered as schools in democratic method. Nevertheless, I repeat, when schools begin to give themselves airs and pretend to be real life, the protest must be raised that such pretence only makes confusion worse confounded. From the point of view of the development of the nation into a spiritual organism, the acceptance by the free churches of the principle of the separation of Church and State is a most deplorable error. It is the most pathetic instance in history of the way in which despairing men come finally to make a virtue of a hateful necessity. The Nonconformists lost all hope of recognition within the Church, and then, in order not to be overwhelmed with disappointment, they declared that the grapes after all were sour. They condemned State establishment of religion as a bad thing. They took up and embraced cordially the lot of independence which was forced upon them. They were shut out in the cold by an act of outrageous injustice. They were removed from the warmth and light of the nation's sovereignty, of which by right and spiritual fact they were a part, and then they came to glory in their own misfortune. There is no more melancholy irony in all history than the readiness with which they have called themselves "Free Churches"; for what they lost when they were driven out of the State organisation of religion was their freedom. They ceased to be free to make themselves heard by those who disagreed with them. They were no longer free to com-

municate their peculiar intellect and virtue to those parts of the nation which most needed their message. They have been separated, isolated, placed too remote for impact and contact and for opportunity of interaction with the Established Church ; and, until recently, so utterly had they confused or mistaken isolation for freedom that they have not even sought unity among themselves, but each dissenting body remained as far aloof from every other as from the Established Church. By their enemies, the Nonconformists were thus rendered comparatively powerless. The statesmen of the aristocratic State Church knew well that isolation would destroy nine-tenths of the power of Puritanism. That is why they granted it the right of independent religious organisation.

Whether we consider either the sects or the Established Church of the present day in relation to the nation's spiritual life as a whole, we find organised religion in England, as compared with organised education, or organised industry, or organised secular politics, relatively dead and impotent. It is fossilised—petrified. The preachers of religion are not dominant factors in the intellectual and moral enlightenment of the nation. Religious organisations do not lead the nation forward to new heights of self-control and vision. They are timid, apologetic, alarmed, cautious. Why is it so ? Why are other departments of organised life progressive, valiant, confident, munificent and beneficent ? It is because democracy as a form of government is a vitalising agent which organised religion has not yet accepted. The moment the religious consciousness within the churches becomes democratic, they will spring into new life and be possessed of new quickening power. But when the official preachers and teachers of the Church have reached such a degree of political intelligence, they will also have

learned to discriminate between individualistic democracy and social democracy. Of the two they will choose the latter ; and when they have adopted its methods they will all, Free Churchmen as well as members of the Establishment, accept the philosophy of the State Church. They will recognise as the highest function of the State that it shall become the teacher and preacher of social justice and of civic idealism.

I have attempted to show first that personal religion proceeds from church discipline, and then that church discipline, in proportion as it aims to be efficient, must be organised ; and that such organisation must be national and territorial, and not along the lines of sectarian belief but upon the principle of including all shades of religious opinion and character. I have tried to show that such organisation is nothing else than State organisation. Only the civic State can establish real co-operation of conflicting parties. Yet this the State can easily do.

It would be possible for the civil government, if it wished, to disestablish the Church of England. The very fact that it has this power proves that it has the lesser power of changing the form of government of the Church. The State could so re-organise the Church that in every geographical area the governing body of each local church could be elected by manhood and womanhood suffrage. It could delegate to such governing bodies the power to appoint and dismiss preachers and priests, exactly as power was given to School Boards to appoint and dismiss teachers. The civil government could, if it wished, decentralise the national Church so that within limits there should be local control. It could, if it wished, organise all the local governing bodies of the Church into some sort of a central council, to which, within limits, it could delegate authority over the national organisation of

the Church. This central council could appoint a special committee to act as an ecclesiastical Cabinet, with powers analogous to those of the Cabinet of the House of Commons. The civic government could further organise all the preachers and teachers of the Church into some sort of union of religious experts, which, within certain limits, should have rights and powers and authority, and could stand in definite relation with the administrators of the Church.

The whole of such proposals appears the more practicable, if we train ourselves to look upon the Church as the national school for adults. A national State Church is the nation at school. This was Coleridge's view ; it was also Sir John Seeley's. The Church, said Seeley, was the nation's moral university. This conception becomes the more self-consistent and covers all the facts of the case the better, if we look upon the education not only of adults but of children as the Church's function. The State in its capacity as educator both of the young and of adults is the Church. If this be what one means by a church, nothing more and nothing less, we have got a philosophic conception which becomes a most illuminating working hypothesis. From the point of view of this conception, the county councils are to-day, in so far as they are doing an educational work for children, performing and fulfilling the functions of the nation as a church. The nation as an organised police force is not a church. The nation as a military power, with an army and navy, is not a church. The nation as an organiser of industry and developer of material wealth is not a church. But how totally different are all these functions from that of he nation as educator and inspirer of young and old !

We are accustomed to make a distinction between secular and religious education ; but the distinction is a

pernicious blunder. Any education which is not religious is bad ; and any religion which is not educative in an all-round and comprehensive sense is false. Elementary schools are the churches of the children, as the churches are the schools of adults. In so far as the organised churches are not instructing the people in science and art as well as in the principles of righteousness, in so far they fall short of being churches. On the other hand, as I have just been saying, in so far as any other bodies are doing true educational work of any kind, they are in so far churches. But how enormously would the whole question of education be simplified and systematised, if we could once become possessed by the idea that religion is national idealism and that national idealism means art, science, and righteousness. What an enormous gain to the nation, if all its citizens could be converted to the thought that no instruction is sound or safe which does not subordinate all other ends to the ideal standards of social justice, of beauty and truth, and, of these three, supremely to the ideal of social justice, from which even truth and beauty proceed and to which they must return.

This philosophic conception of personal religion, of the Church, nation, and State, provides the very principle of which the Liberal party has been in need. It is furthermore the principle which lies at the heart of Labour organisations and of every movement which aims at the realisation of social democracy. It is a principle which the Labour party needs but to know in order to adopt. It is a principle which will unite the bewildered Socialists now to be found in every political party in the State and will construct out of them a new party. That party will be religious as well as political. It will look upon the educational system of the State as its church, and therefore will organise the nation politically as a

church. Education, at least for children, has in the last fifty years become ever increasingly a State function. Thus we find before our very eyes and without anyone's seeming to realise it, the re-establishment of the Church as a State Church. If, as I believe, schools for children are churches for children, and if these schools have now become State schools, what have we been doing since 1870 but establishing a new State Church, in so far as the young are concerned ?

The only retrogressive turn which has been taken since 1870 has been the transference of the control of elementary schools from *ad hoc* governing bodies to county councils and other authorities which are not purely educational. The abolition of *ad hoc* educational bodies was a radical mistake in policy due to religious blindness. It could only have originated with minds not disciplined or informed in the psychology and sociology either of education or of religion. It could but have emanated from the vanity of those who had so well managed public sewers, the pavement of streets, and the running of electric trams, that they imagined themselves equal to any emergency and rushed in where even angels would have feared to tread till they had removed their out-of-door sandals.

When we realise that the education both of children and adults, but chiefly of adults, is the function of a church as such, we see plainly that the instrument of that spiritual discipline of which I have been speaking must consist of religious meetings. We also see that religious meetings always do and always must consist of what are called church services. Accordingly, the reform of church discipline means the reform of church services ; and every re-organisation of the legislative and administrative government of churches must be to the end of

making church services more efficacious as the quickener and guide of personal insight and of enthusiasm for ideals of science, art, and social justice.

I have already stated that the true relationship between the nation as a church and the State was obscured by two mistakes. One was that of which I have here been treating, the anti-democratic prejudice and practice ; the other to which I referred was supernaturalism. Not only has there never been a democratic State Church or any other kind of a democratic church ; there has also never been any such institution as a naturalistic church. All churches, having been conceived and born under the influence of animistic theories of the universe, have been committed to the idea of trust in personal agencies outside of civil society as the source of moral redemption. Not only so, but all churches in their ecclesiastical polity and in their administrative and legislative government have been markedly affected by the preconceptions of supernaturalism. Church government has been as much biassed by it as have the church forms and ceremonies and creeds. It was impossible to understand the vital and organic relation between the Church and the nation and again the relation of both the Church and the nation to the State as the organised and unified sovereignty of both, so long as the Church was believed to be heaven-descended in a spiritistic instead of an ethical sense. So long as miracle was held to be a sign of divine origin, so long must the national and educational significance of the Church be misunderstood. So long as religion was chiefly concerned in preparing the souls of men not for service to the nation but for a life after death, it was inconceivable that the Church's government and her relationship with the State should be rightly interpreted. Only when supernaturalism has been replaced by humanism can we know the meaning

and interdependence of Church and State, and of both with the national life. But here I wish chiefly to call attention to the error of attributing to the State Church evil effects which are due not to the fact that the Church is established but to the fact that it is still supernaturalistic. Every supernaturalistic church produces those evils which humanists most deplore. If State churches produce them more abundantly than private-enterprise churches, it is nothing against establishment. It only means that whatever a State church does it can do more efficiently than private enterprise could. If its preconceptions are mistaken, it will do evil ; and it will do evil more efficiently than could free churches. But the very reason why a supernaturalistic State church is to be dreaded by humanists is a reason why a naturalistic State church should be welcomed. Those who identify religion with supernaturalism, and on that account condemn it, would inevitably wish to abolish all churches, and principally State churches, because these are the more powerful. But once grant that humanistic religion is not a contradiction in terms and it follows that a church may be humanistic. From this it follows that a State church will be a more powerful engine of humanistic religion than private organisations would be.

Now, supernaturalism has always been the enemy of free thought, free speech and free voting ; and free thought, free speech and free voting have always been enemies of supernaturalism. On the other hand, humanism has always been the friend and abettor of freedom of thought, speech, and vote. These practices in turn have furthered the doctrine of humanism, because it is favourable to themselves. It would therefore seem that if once the people of a nation could be converted to the principles of democracy, they would inevitably seek

the sanction and support of the State for a national church, which would be the upholder of scientific views of the universe and of national idealism as the essence of true religion. In proportion, however, as the truly philosophic conception of the Church prevailed, there would be no suppression of minorities, no branding of heretics, no stifling of original thought, no gagging of enthusiasts, by the State, no attempt to thwart the popular will in any crisis. The free expression and decision of the people would not be limited merely to matters of ecclesiastical administration and legislation. The fundamental questions of life would be continuously left open, and every moral agent in the nation would be invited to contribute his original experience, insight and judgment to their ever deeper solution.

## CHAPTER III

### A REVISED PRAYER BOOK AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY

During the last half century religious controversy has raged around the Bible. During the next half century the storm-centre in England will be the Book of Common Prayer. For the Book of Common Prayer reproduces the Bible from the point of view which the theologians of the Church took in England after fifteen hundred years of metaphysical evolution. The book which the priests of the Established Church hold in their hand is not the Bible but the nation's official manual of Morning and Evening Prayer, of Articles of Religion and of special rites and ceremonies. That which stands between the people and their opportunity to receive from their spiritual guides what would prove to be bread of life is not the Bible's own teaching but the current interpretation of the Prayer Book.

In the sixteenth century there began not only in England but on the Continent the evolution of a new idea. That idea has now developed into full self-consciousness and definite outline. A point of view has come into existence from which the Bible itself is being interpreted differently. We understand the Bible now not to mean what those imagined it to mean who reconstructed its substance in

the Book of Common Prayer. It is therefore possible for us to-day to embody in a new or in a revised national manual of religious rites and ceremonies the teaching and spirit of the Bible as we now interpret them. Such a manual would then, equally with the present Prayer Book, preserve to us the religious treasure of the past. But it would also communicate to the people the new method and spirit of science, and the new outlook and strength and self-reliance of social democracy.

In imputing such significance to the Book of Common Prayer I am not overlooking the fact that half of the religious organisations of England do not accept it or use it. Nor am I oblivious to the still further proof of the Established Church's present incapacity for its work, to be found in the aloofness of the masses of the people from Church services. But I would commend the Book of Common Prayer as the base of departure in the attempt to arrive at a new and adequate manual of national religious services, because from the point of view of social democracy and humanistic idealism the slight variations in shade of meaning between Nonconformity and the Church become altogether invisible. The differences that seem so significant to the religious factions which contend about them appear trifling to those interested in the great and moving concerns of the nation's present-day duties and interests. For the purposes which we here have in view, therefore, the Book of Common Prayer may be taken as representative of the thought and import of Nonconformity as well as of the Church. This is particularly so because the present Book of Common Prayer, if it were to be revised according to the principles I am here advocating, would lose all those of its doctrinal characteristics which now offend the Nonconformist intellect. It would embody ideas which would at first give offence, probably,

to equal numbers of Free Churchmen and Anglicans. It would likewise find as many sympathisers in one of these great religious parties as in the other.

For our present purposes, also, the Anglican Prayer Book may even be taken as representative of the Roman Catholic Church. For those doctrinal and ceremonial changes introduced into material from the Roman Catholic Missal and Breviary under Henry VIII., Edward VI. and Elizabeth fall into the obscurity of utter insignificance when we assume the standpoint of social democracy and humanistic moral idealism. We are not, therefore, narrowing our outlook in focussing our attention upon the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. For out of it, by applying these principles, we should attain the same manual of Church rites and ceremonies as if we took as our starting-point either the Roman Catholic rites or the practices in vogue among the free churches. What we must aim at is a manual which would be essentially suitable for every Christian nation in the world. Indeed, not even at the confines of Christendom do we find the limits of the applicability of a new version of the Book of Common Prayer. For when once the historic manual has been transformed by discarding every vestige of anti-democratic prejudice and of trust in personal agencies outside of the social organism itself, and fresh material and new rites have been introduced to meet present-day demands and exigencies, an instrument of religious propaganda will have been acquired which, while still Christian in origin and spirit, will have outgrown the provincialism of its source and history.

The national unit, into an instrument for which I am suggesting that the Book of Common Prayer be re-made, is primarily England. To the English first must be brought this instrument of religious cohesion. But in

proportion as it achieves its end it will be of service to every other nation, and afterwards to the cohesion of nations as much as to that of individuals within the nation.

Let us first turn to England as a house at present fatally divided against herself and consider how a revised version of the Prayer Book would bring into spiritual harmony classes of persons now hopelessly dissevered, if not positively in bitter antagonism.

At the outset, one cannot but lament what is called the conflict between science and religion. Hitherto the whole tendency of the scientific method and spirit, so far as it has touched the religious consciousness at all, has been centrifugal and disintegrating. It has divided and isolated men. It has driven them from churches, but has not drawn them to any new centre of spiritual life. Science has become wedded to commercialism on one side, and on another is running into theosophic freak. For fully three centuries the right of private judgment has tended to this splitting up of churches, until now among the foremost of the scientific world every individual man has become a church unto himself. What is needed is an instrument of religious cohesion. That such an instrument can be found is the more likely because, despite all appearances to the contrary, science both by its method and spirit ultimately tends to unity. What is science, but the dropping out as unverified of what cannot be demonstrated to every rational being to be true? And what has taken place in the domain of each special science, except a complete unification of thought and an agreement and consolidation of men? The whole evolution of science is from a variety of opinions to a common judgment. Every year, every month, disputed points are settled and intellectual harmony is established. It is only

in reference to that domain of human thought which has not yet been allowed to be taken full possession of by the scientific spirit and method—religion—that scientific men differ still one from another, while standing at sword's point against the inherited tradition of past ages as it is manifested in the Church. If once the rites and ceremonies of the Church could be transformed so as no longer to violate the fundamental methods and spirit of science, is it quixotic to hope, as I do, that a manual of such services would act as the most powerful engine conceivable for drawing the whole nation into one universal religious fellowship ?

Science thus far has been centrifugal in tendency. But in the fullness of time, which has now come, it is equally her function to become centripetal. She has destroyed. But all the applications of her methods to chemistry, to physics, to botany, to biology, show that her fullest character is revealed in synthetic and constructive work. The old-fashioned notion still widely prevails that if people be allowed to think for themselves each will go his own and each a different way. But if people really think for themselves they will think according to the method and spirit of science ; and the ultimate result will be that in going each his own way they will all go the same way.

The cleavage which now exists between science and religion must not be mistaken as identical with the division of the nation into those who belong to churches and those who on intellectual grounds have been compelled to withdraw from church membership. Intimate acquaintance with religious thought and scientific education in England exposes to view the fact that thousands of members and preachers of churches have been as much touched by the spirit of science as those persons who have

been led by it to break with religious organisations, or as those who have been born and reared in circles wholly out of sympathy with historic religious teachings. Such scientific minds within the Church, however, are apt to remain quiet and passive. They do not in its councils and at its services give any expression to the new ideas which they have adopted. They carry on no active propaganda of science. The result is that at present within the churches old-fashioned notions seem to bear completer sway than is actually the case. They have almost a monopoly of the pulpit. They absolutely dominate the set forms and ceremonies. But, notwithstanding, the new notions are alive and strong within the Church. A crisis at any moment may precipitate them into definite formula and form. Any day these modern men within the Church may speak out. They have remained within and kept quiet, awaiting, in the interest of the Church and of religion and the nation, the right opportunity. There is a time to keep silent, and they have respected its claim ; but only because they remember that there will be a time to speak. These men of science have remained within the Church because they shrank back in bewilderment and alarm from the moral isolation which severance from the Church would entail. They had a deep sense of the ethical benefits of spiritual fellowship. They believed, and not wrongly, that spiritual isolation tends to engender laxity of life, even if it does not always actually produce this unfortunate result. In terror at the nihilism which seemed to await them if they were to follow truth whithersoever it might lead, they have in religious solicitude drawn back apparently the deeper into the twilight of the old faith. They have clung to what has stood fast so long rather than yield themselves up to a stream which seemed but to flow into

an ocean of nothingness. It appeared to them that they must decide for themselves, if they decided on the instant, between truth and righteousness ; and they have not been ashamed temporarily to prefer concrete righteousness to abstract truth, abiding the time when these would cease to be in practical antagonism.

Of the two classes of persons—those who break with all Church associations on account of new ideas and those who, adopting them, remain quietly within the Church—it is quite possible that the latter class have chosen the wiser course and have manifested the deeper ethical insight. They have seen that science, while it has meant knowledge accurate, systematic and verified, has not yet meant wisdom ; and they have preferred wisdom unscientific to science unwise. But were science now to become wise and stoop to the service of those very ends to which religion has always ministered, these seemingly more timid natures within the churches would forthwith declare themselves disciples of science. To such hitherto quiescent believers in it, any transformation in its spirit of the rites and ceremonies of the Church will demonstrate that it has at last itself turned to the service of righteousness. It will show that the hour has come when within the churches, for the sake of the Church and of her historic institutions, the men of science must become the reorganisers of her forms. They will themselves demand a restatement not only of the creeds, a revision not only of the Church's articles of faith, but a fresh embodiment of the new view of the universe and of man in corresponding rites and ceremonies. The first evidence, then, of the cohesive power of a revised Prayer Book would be the bringing back of the intellectuals of the nation into the Church.

A second class of British subjects seems still more

remote from the fellowship of the Established Church of England than the scientific men. It is a class, indeed, in which are to be found many scientific thinkers of the boldest type. But it stands historically and psychologically on religious grounds aloof from Christian fellowship and loyally knit together in a race pride and idealism of its own. I refer to the Jews of England. For, few though they be in number and apart in sympathy, there could be no greater triumph of humanity, science, and the moral idealism of religion than that at last some instrument of communication and mutual understanding could be established, which would unite in one fellowship Christian and Jew. And I verily believe that a national manual of religious services, interpreting life and destiny from the point of view of social democracy and humanitarian idealism, would prove just such an instrument.

No one can deal with an attempt to bring about religious unity throughout the nation without finding himself face to face with this tragic problem of the social and religious aloofness of the modern Jew. Indeed, the fitness of any proposed solution of religious strife could not be better tested than by its ability to bring the Jews and the Christians at last together. The Jews are being rapidly emancipated from economic thraldom and political and social disabilities. They are discarding the tenets of their old religious faith. But thus far they remain exclusive in sympathy. There are movements within their own circles which prove that they wish to revise the services of the synagogue, and along the very lines and from the very principles which I have been advocating. Is it not probable, then, that an analogous movement within Gentile circles would be welcomed by them, and would lead at last to religious co-operation and unification ?

My grounds for this hope are not wholly *a priori*. They consist in the fact, well known to me, that already in several nations of the West Jews have been prominent among the pioneers, along with non-Jews, in efforts to establish a religion and a Church based on moral science. Many of the best Jews of our day see that what their people need more than a territory and political state of their own is a bringing of the Law and the Prophets, in the very spirit of the Law and the Prophets, up to date—up to the requirements of science and critical philosophy and of the arts both æsthetic and utilitarian. Such a rationalised Judaism would resolve the opposition between Jew and Christian into a higher unity. It is possible that a transformation of Jewish doctrines and forms and ceremonies in the spirit of modern idealism would lead ultimately to Church services and ceremonies and rites almost identical with those which in the end a Christian manual would embody.

Thus we see that an attempt at revision, for which I am pleading, although it started from the Anglican manual, would issue in an instrument welcome to the humanistic party not only of Nonconformists and Roman Catholics, but even of the Jews.

Comparatively happy were the religious state of England to-day if the only breaches in her life were those between the scientific and the unscientific, or between Christians and Jews. But equally great and deplorable are the chasms which separate and divide among themselves sects and groups within sects which have been wholly untouched by the doctrine of evolution and the philosophical criticism of our day. We need some instrument of cohesive power to bring together Evangelicals and Broad Churchmen, Anglicans, Baptists, Calvinists and Methodists, who are separated not by

science against church dogma but by dogma against dogma. The same reasons, however, which make me believe that a revised version of the nation's manual of rites and ceremonies would heal the breaches between science and Christianity and Christianity and Judaism, compel me to hope that it would exercise a similar influence among the centres of various Christian traditions.

There have been many attempts to effect a union among the Christian bodies by means of a compromise. It has been thought that all the sects will unite if only they can be induced to drop points of difference and cling to points of conscious agreement. But every such attempt has proved utterly futile. It has led, as we have recently seen in England, to a colourless and impotent undenominationalism, which perhaps produces an armed truce, but settles no differences and assuages no antagonisms. Undenominationalism is an abstraction which will only pass muster as a religion in the interregnum between two great national ideals. The orthodox sects all believe in supernaturalism. But for each sect not to dare to point to the special supernatural agencies it believes in, nor to its own particular means of conciliating its invisible deities, for fear of awakening sectarian bitterness, is to cry halt just when the nation needs to march on. No! Nothing but a new instrument which will render vivid, concrete and beautiful the new synthesis of social democracy, science and Christianity, can unify Christians among themselves. The new bond will, therefore, be an idea which is as yet wholly outside the consciousness of the majority of orthodox Christians and is directly in antagonism to the supernaturalism of the churches. It is true that that idea has not yet begun to win the extremely orthodox believers in Christianity, nor has it begun to transform and vivify the centres of

religious conservatism. But it must be remembered that the new synthesis has never yet been concreted into a cultus. Such a concretion is exactly what I am pleading for when I urge a revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

Lest the force of my argument be lost by not appreciating how a revision of the Prayer Book is to be achieved, it must be borne in mind how in England other reforms have been brought to ultimate triumph. Judging from analogous cases, I infer that various individual persons must first, as I am doing in this volume, offer tentative suggestions as to revision. These should be applied and made the basis of new forms. At the same time, since rites and ceremonies can only be tested by being actually practised, religious meetings of those sympathising with such attempts should be held in which the new forms were used as the order of service. By trials of this kind, in proportion as the services fulfilled their object, other assemblies would adopt them.

Such a process is actually going on in the Ethical Movement in England. There were in 1906 some forty-two Ethical Societies in existence, and in them all some service was conducted more or less completely embodying the principles I here suggest. As these services improve, they will not only draw new members to the existing societies but will lead to the formation of new centres, where forms still more perfectly embodying their idea will be adopted. When instead of forty-two there are four or five hundred such illustrations and object-lessons, each one supported by several hundred persons, the movement for revision of the Prayer Book will be strong enough to become a force in practical politics. But from the very first the instrument of such propaganda must be a manual of rites and ceremonies.

I reiterate this point, because until quite recent years nearly all persons who had discarded the old forms, on account of the error in them, were prone to be chary of all common devotion. They cried out, "The world needs no kind of an ecclesiastical religion with priests and prayers and holy books. It needs a religion of justice. In the new religion nothing will count but clear thoughts and honest deeds." They did not realise that if this attitude were adopted religion in the old sense would cease to be. Politics, economics, art, science, and spontaneous morality would take its place. But here again we detect the vitiating blunder of the old individualism to which I have already referred. As if a man by himself alone, nay rather in defiance of organised attempts at spiritual discipline, could attain to clear thoughts and honest deeds!

Now, the older prophets, despite their trust in personal agencies outside of human society, were well aware that only by the systematic concentration of a nation's attention upon righteousness could a people ever reach honesty and the clear vision. The whole apparatus of Judaism and Christianity was instituted and perpetuated for the attainment of justice, by creating in the minds of the people a love of justice. The old worship, with its priests and prayers and holy books, was in ultimate aim a religion of justice. Its end was right. Its means unhappily were pre-scientific, but they were, however falsely interpreted, natural and human. If by "ecclesiastical religion" is meant a looking to supernatural persons for help, let us away with it. If prayer be but a petition to superhuman agencies, we have had enough of it. If books cannot be holy unless they teach submission to invisible and incorporeal beings, then without doubt the world needs no such things. But unassuming teachers and preachers of

human ideals, confessedly fallible but well disciplined in the method and spirit of scientific test and search, are needed by the world more than ever. And a systematic turning for help to the real sources of redemption is indispensable. So, too, holy books are required, if holiness means, as it always has meant, not pandering to selfishness, vanity or lust, but on the contrary ministering to the spirit of self-sacrifice for great human ends.

Among nineteenth-century prophets no one was more alive than Emerson to the fact that religion is turning away from the subtleties of scholasticism to morals, and that this change is altogether an advance. He was supremely the apostle of clear thoughts and honest deeds. But his mother-wit prevented him from falling into the error of thinking that these could be attained without the natural means of regular religious practices in common. The passage in his essay on "Worship" in which he prophesies that "there will be a new church, founded on moral science," is often quoted in witness of his prophetic instinct. But the special evidence of genius in this passage is not his saying that an ethical church will come, but his recognition that it will of necessity begin, as he characteristically puts it, "at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law"; at first "without shawms or psaltery or sackbut." Emerson, although he recognised the necessity of it, saw no virtue or permanence in this initial state of nakedness. The new church, he went on to add, "will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters, science for symbol and illustration." He accordingly foretold that it would "fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry." Still more directly in his essay on "The Sovereignty of Ethics" does he give his sanction to a church that will educate and discipline men into clear thoughts and honest deeds; but

with greater emphasis also does he insist upon the necessity of rites and ceremonies.

"It accuses us," he says, "that pure ethics is not now formulated and concreted into a cultus, a fraternity, with assemblings and holy days, with song and book, with brick and stone. Why have not those," he asks, "who believe in it and love it, left all for it, and dedicated themselves to write out its scientific scriptures, to become its vulgate for millions?"

But even Emerson, as can be seen in these passages, suffered perhaps under the limitations of his age and nationality. He speaks of a new church, as if a new organisation was to be founded and as if the old church would not transform itself. Now, it must be granted that the old did not base itself upon moral science, because science had not yet come. But science having now arrived, the notion is inconceivable that the old church should continue resting on a foundation of trust in supernatural sources of redemption. Surely the old church will refound itself, and this time on a scientific basis—on science humane and therefore moral. But in so doing, the Church will discard only so much of its accumulated beauty, music, picture and poetry as is positively an affront to the truth which we modern men behold. It is a fact that pure ethics has not yet concreted itself; but impure ethics—ethics transfused with a certain amount of trust in supernatural agencies—has long since done so. The organisations which have achieved this work, there is every reason to hope, will themselves, thanks to the prevalence of the scientific spirit, now drive out supernaturalism—which after all was never the real treasure of the Church. They will remove the dross for the sake of their own pure gold. At least in England the Church is still alive; it has, moreover,

been permeated with the new hopes and ideals. It surely then will know how to continue to keep alive and to grow into the church of men to come.

Sir John Seeley saw as perfectly as Emerson that religion is moving steadily away from scholastic subtleties to the science of ethics; and that a church, with assemblings and holy days, with song and book, with brick and stone, is an indispensable accessory to national character. But, unlike that of Emerson, Seeley's historic sense was disciplined and strengthened by systematic scholarship. He therefore would hear nothing of a new church organisation, but only of the old Church renewed. All that Emerson deplored in the teaching and practices of the dominant religious institutions Seeley equally lamented. But the defects of the Church are not the essence of the Church. It has lived in spite of them, at least in spite of their perpetuation. Those who love the Church most, and who are most ready to sacrifice all for her, shall be brought to distinguish what is vital in her from what is extraneous and may prove fatal.

I have said that the outcome of our task might prove a benefit even beyond the borders of Christendom. We are to-day face to face with new religious problems arising from the contact, now for the first time, of China and Japan on equal terms with the civilisation of the West. Japan is already losing her belief in invisible and incorporeal agencies as the source of human weal and woe. Her intellectual classes are discarding the naïve spiritism involved, if not expressly declared, in the old Shinto cult, and are reinterpreting their ancestor-worship in terms of social idealism and of the historic unity and solidarity of Japan.

Some merriment was recently awakened throughout the Western nations by a report that Japan, not many

years before, had sent representatives to the West in search of a religion which would be to the benefit of Japan and suitable to adopt as the State religion. If the Japanese did take such a step it furnishes only one more proof of their consummate statesmanship and originality. There is not a nation of the Western world but as a nation is alarmed at the decay of the old faiths and puzzled and bewildered how to keep up the moral idealism of the nation, now that the old dogmas and forms have lost their hold of the popular imagination. Further, when the relation of religion to national idealism is fully comprehended it will be seen that there is nothing grotesque in an attempt to find a religion for a nation. Such an attempt means an effort to bring into definite outline and shape, and to organise systematically, what had hitherto been the inarticulate and undirected idealism of the nation. When it is thus realised that, after all, a religion at its best and fullest is nothing else than the nation's idealism organised into a system of moral education, it will be seen that not once but always should a nation be on the look-out for improvements in its religious methods and principles.

That Japan found no religious system of the West suitable for her needs is again a proof of her penetration and discrimination. Is it, however, foolish to believe that if England for three centuries had been revising, re-adapting and perfecting her religious institutions and teachings, so as to bring them every decade abreast of England's own need, Japan would have found in England such a manual of religious worship and ceremonial and dogma as with very slight re-adaptation would have ministered to her newly-awakened consciousness? Japan found for herself in the West a science of chemistry and chemical laboratories. She found methods of manufacture and agriculture. She

adopted systems of sanitation and medicine. Had the religion of the West been as up-to-date as her science, those Japanese representatives who went in search of a religion would not have returned to the East empty-souled.

Few have realised that Christianity entered upon a new era the moment Japan conquered her Russian assailants. That moment, for the first time in fifteen hundred years, Christianity stood again face to face in intimate relationship of equality with pagan ideas and principles, and in full consciousness of the fact of that equality. Japan not only gained a material victory, but won the moral admiration of the world. Historians have noted that so long as Christianity in the early ages was in intimate and reciprocal contact with heathen culture, she was constantly deriving from it as many benefits as she gave. They have pointed out that after she had once conquered the whole range of civilisation and was no longer confronted with conflicting principles and ideals of religion, she lost those benefits which always come of comparison and contrast. Without fear of challenge, she could assert and impress upon the minds of her ignorant subjects, that she possessed a monopoly of divine wisdom. Now again after fifteen hundred years the people of Christendom will be forced to compete, as it were, in the open market of the world for the acceptance of her religious wares.

China is following in the footsteps of Japan. Or, rather, Japan herself is permeating China not only with her own Oriental idealism but with all the methods and results of science and invention which she has imported from the West. China will respond by the adoption of Japanese ideas. First she will accept them as an aid to commerce and to military skill and equipment ; then will follow inevitably an overthrow of her ancient animism

and demon-worship. Even now the more intelligent disciples of Confucius are the teachers of a moral idealism absolutely free from dependence upon trust in personal agencies invisible and incorporeal.

Whatever else might be thought of such a revised and re-interpreted Book of Common Prayer as I am pleading for, it is not likely that anyone, comparing it with the Roman Catholic Missal or the Anglican Prayer Book as it stands to-day, or with the forms used in dissenting churches, would deny that it would be more likely than these to appeal to Jews, Buddhists and Confucians. The antipathy of ages stands between the Jew and a Christo-centric cult, whereas scarcely an obstacle intervenes between him and a system of universal ethical idealism. Likewise many of the disciples of Zoroaster and Buddha and many of the Japanese are ripe for a universalised humanitarian religion. To introduce such a religion we must invent an instrument, as it were, for the social storage and transmission of modern ethical humanism.

It may seem to some preposterous that a mere manual of new church services could have any such effects as I anticipate. But it can seem so only to those who have overlooked the importance of other similar devices in religion and of machinery in other spheres of human enterprise. We are apt to forget that preaching is a mechanical device; yet the invention of it secured the spread of Christianity throughout the Western world. We are apt to forget that the keeping of one day in seven sacred to the moral interests of a nation is a mechanical device of a very evident order; yet it was the means of preserving Judaism for many centuries even after the Jewish nation had lost its independence. It must be remembered that social meetings at stated

intervals for the worship of a nation's God are nothing but a tool shaped and used for certain ends. Yet that tool has been the means of accomplishing those ends. It should further be remembered that these purely mechanical, natural devices of human ingenuity are the means by which supernatural religions have been perpetuated. Their efficiency is beyond all question. Who, therefore, can doubt that these same means, if used consciously to the end of national ethical idealism, would prove equally efficacious ?

Now, one of the many mechanical instruments for the promulgation of religious ideas is this which I have been advocating—a manual of services fitted to a nation's present needs. Nobody could fail to see that any new ethical movement must naturally resort to preaching as a method of propaganda ; and, in fact, such a method is adopted. Nor do many persons question the right and appropriateness of using one day of rest in seven as the most opportune time for preaching and for meetings for the spread of new ideas. But a manual of religious rites and ceremonies has been wholly discarded by those who have rejected supernaturalism. They seem to have imagined that such a thing is in its very nature fit only to be an instrument for the propagation of spiritism. They refuse to use it because it is associated too unpleasantly in their minds with the beliefs which they have outgrown. The result is a predicament of the gravest nature. How can the new moral idealism be spread and become a mighty national asset ; how can it change from an exclusive philosophy of the few into an energising religion of the whole nation, if it allows the enemies of science and democracy to hold a monopoly of the chief mechanical means of communicating from one man to another religious principles, sentiments and

inward meanings? Formulæ, rites, and ceremonies used by a social group constitute that chief mechanical means.

If anyone wishes to know why humanitarian freethought has scarcely made any progress in two thousand years as an organising, nation-building force, let him not imagine that it is because it is inherently negative, disruptive, or destructive. Let him be well assured that it is because Freethinkers have in the past never realised the supreme importance of concreting their humanitarian idealism into a cultus, into a fraternity, with assemblings and holy days; while on the other hand the champions of supernaturalistic religion have fully appreciated the necessity for such devices. In the past, rationalistic idealism has always been individualistic and non-æsthetic. It has always undervalued the debt which original minds owe to the common mind about them. It has always depreciated the artistic, poetic, and symbolic way of communicating ideas. It has always over-estimated the independent resources of the individual—especially of his reasoning powers. We have no evidence of the failure of a rationalistic idealism which was at the same time socialistic in spirit and symbolical in its methods of presentation. Accordingly we are justified in thinking that psychological socialism and ritualistic methods of propaganda would prove as powerful in the spread of naturalism as they have been in the perpetuation of supernaturalism. We have, therefore, reason to believe that whoever prepares a book of common humanitarian devotion, adequate for a scientific and democratic age, will do for the spread of humanistic religion such a service as Marconi or Edison or Lister or Pasteur has done for trade, commerce, and medical and sanitary art. Until the new idealism possesses its own manual of religious ritual, it cannot communicate effectively its

deeper thought and purpose. The moment, however, it has invented such a means of communication, it would seem inevitable that a rapid moral and intellectual advancement of man must at last take place, equal in speed and in beneficence to the material advancement which followed during the last century in the wake of scientific inventions. Only the instrument for the storage and transmission of the new idealism has been lacking.

If my contention for the unique value of a revised Book of Common Prayer be opposed on the ground that simple informal preaching of naturalistic moral idealism would be far more effective and more congenial to enlightened men, a complete answer is ready at hand. Preaching presupposes preachers ; and preachers in every city of the world mean a whole army of men and women equipped for the career of ethical propagandists. It presupposes a wealthy and powerful organisation to support and direct these preachers. But with a millionth part of the wealth required to do this, a suitable manual of ethical services could be printed and placed on sale in every town throughout the English-speaking world. Then, without any elaborate organisation or great expense, any group of sympathisers anywhere could organise themselves and hold regular meetings where the services could be practised. A meeting using the hymns, canticles, selections from literature, and statements of principle, contained in such a manual, could create within itself an atmosphere of moral faith and enthusiasm which would quicken into new life everyone who participated in it. If such a manual also contained marriage and funeral services, it would make it possible immediately to conduct new marriage and burial rites.

Nothing has more astonished me than the actual ex-

perience of this one great difference between the preaching of an ethical sermon and the celebration of an ethical ceremony. I have often regretted as an ethical preacher my inability to be in a hundred places at once. This inability limited each sermon to its one utterance or to a wearisomely slow repetition week after week. But having some years since elaborated and conducted an ethical wedding ceremonial, I have ever since been lending copies of it to various persons throughout England, who have reported to me that all who were present where it was used were gratified that at last a marriage rite consonant with their own convictions and not too defective in form had come into existence.

Thus by means of a manual of services it might be possible for an organisation inspired by humanistic moral idealism to spread a thousandfold more rapidly than it could otherwise do.

Many persons have been astonished and possibly even terrified by the rapid development of Christian Science during the last decade. This teaching is already in evidence among us in England even in brick and stone—which, whatever else it means, proves that many persons of wealth believe that Christian Science has come to stay. The rich, however lavish in expenditure upon pleasures, seldom give to good causes which they believe are only transient crazes. So astonishing has been the organised growth of Christian Science that many have sought to explain its spread as one more evidence of man's innate love of mystery. Many have even been tempted to find in it a proof that unregenerate human nature craves for the supernatural. I myself knew no other cause to which the phenomenon could be traced until, drawn by curiosity rather than by any intention of discovering its causes, I recently attended a Sunday evening meeting of the Christian

Science Church near Sloane Square. Its fine stone building had already attracted my eye—not to confess that it had stirred envy and bewilderment in my heart to see that this newest of the sects already possessed such a temple as its home, while the older Ethical Society had not a place of its own to lay its head. I entered the auditorium of this Christian Science Temple, with its chaste and simple style of architecture. I had known nothing whatever of the order of a Christian Science meeting. Imagine then the revelation it was to me, who for years had been drifting, by some inevitable train of logic and experience, into a realisation of the necessity for rites and ceremonies to supplement preaching, to find that here in the Christian Science churches there was no preaching at all. Reliance was placed exclusively upon a set and prescribed ritual.

Some great organising genius has been preparing practical means for the transmission in the most effective way of the Christian Science gospel to the intelligent and leisured public. Into my hand was placed a leaflet containing references to the Christian Science hymn-book, to Mrs Eddy's *Science and Health*, and to the Bible, arranged for use for every Sunday in the then current quarter of the year. Thus it had been made possible for any little group of Christian Scientists immediately to conduct a religious service of an hour in length. No great organisation was required. I have since been told by members of the Christian Science Church that generally the religious services of any new group are at first conducted in the drawing-room of a private house. Such has been the ingenuity and foresight of the organisers of the Christian Science movement. Its statesmen have proved themselves suitable to become leaders of the Order of Jesuits, so subtle and instinct with common sense has been their judgment in constructing out of materials

almost hopeless, as I should have thought, a ritual full of variety and interest and yet centring in one dominant idea. At this meeting near Sloane Square two persons conducted the services. But not, in the old-fashioned manner, two men. Nor were they two women, for the inventors of this new ritual wished to avoid a monotony of tone and a suggestion of only one type of dual humanity. Here in the Christian Science Church a man and a woman, neither one more prominent than the other, conduct the services. They repeat alternately passages of equal length. Thus a rhythmic swing gave repose and sweep to the mental movement of the whole meeting. The woman read passages from Mrs Eddy's *Science and Health.* The man reinforced its utterances with kindred ones from the Bible. Yet no one passage was long enough to fatigue the attention. The whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, was drawn upon to buttress with its clear, simple, concrete insight and imagery the stilted rhetoric of the cryptic ebullitions of the modern prophetess. The hymns were sung, where possible, to familiar tunes. The Lord's Prayer was repeated by the assembled congregation. Then a moment's pause filled the meeting with that mystic sense of oneness which only social silence can engender into a perfect calm. As I went away from the meeting blest by its elevated influence, despite my rejection of every tenet of its metaphysics, I found myself mightily reinforced in the conviction that the ritual is the thing. National idealism needs what its disciples have all along till now been too dull to think of giving it. I said to myself: "This sectarian doctrine of the Christian Scientists, which takes a mental truth and physiological fact of limited range (the power of ideas to beget health, happiness and character) and insanely and dangerously extends it into a universal law, has been

embodied in a liturgy which is rapidly winning converts. How much more rapidly would a religion of national idealism spread, if it had but found its poet-statesman, its prophet-priest, shrewd and wise enough to have constructed its ritual, not omitting from it either man or woman or rhythm or song or social silence or the voices of the congregation speaking in unison or the powerful reinforcements from the literatures of the world! How rapid from city to city and nation to nation would be the growth of the Ethical Church of the Nations, the moment every few gathered together could from a leaflet celebrate the rites of the new gospel!"

The inadequacy of preaching alone as an instrument of propaganda, at least at the beginning of a new religious movement, arises from the fact that inevitably there are never more than a few preachers who grasp the real character of any new message. The result is, if it spreads rapidly and forms groups of disciples, the new movement is sure to break loose from its original moorings and to drift. Almost imperceptibly it suffers an unintended mental change. Nothing could prevent this alteration unless the spoken word of the preacher was somehow kept close to the central thought of the movement by written and more or less authoritative statements, which were recognised by the whole group as containing its essential meaning. As such statements are often to be consulted, they should embody the message in condensed and vivid form, in a style suitable for reading again and again, and should prove inexhaustible of meaning after many ponderings. So, while it may be granted that a manual of religious services alone could scarcely draw disciples in the first instance, but would require the initial impulse either of some spoken word or of some book not prepared as a manual of services, it is also true that such

spoken word or such a book alone would be inadequate. Indeed, even the preachers themselves of a new movement, however intimate their relation to its founder and their study of its authoritative scriptures, would need the manual of services to keep them to their moorings. At least, only the greatest moral and intellectual geniuses will not drift unconsciously to other than their original foundations. The minds of ordinary men are by nature no more fixed than floating islands.

A manual of humanitarian devotion could be used on occasions where no original discourse was to be delivered, as at family devotions and at morning and evening chapel in schools and colleges. But, like the Prayer Book of the Church of England, it would be equally adapted to meetings where the central feature was a sermon.

It must furthermore not be forgotten that, whatever the differences between services and sermons, the sermon itself, in proportion as it is really great, powerful and of lasting value, partakes of the nature of a service. The two great differences between it and the other parts of the service are that it is the one item not fixed and determined beforehand, and also the one which does not lay any claim to being cast into a form of enduring value.

However important preaching may be, the set forms may at least be held to be more independent of it than it of them. For they will always present the fundamental ideas and the deeper trend of the faith embodied in them, and will do so in literary form ; while one never could be secure of the same effects from the preaching itself. The preacher's theme is left to his own selection ; it may be wide of the main issue and will inevitably be dependent on the mental gifts of the particular man and on his momentary fitness. It is at any rate clear that from the start a manual of services must supplement preaching.

It would be the primary instrument for ensuring permanence and consistency of propaganda. It alone could sustain and educate the nucleus of a new group of disciples and could steadily knit fresh recruits into an abiding and vital unity.

A further reason why the use of a manual of services has not been appreciated by men of ethical and scientific faith as compared with preaching is that the services familiar to us—those of the Anglican and Roman Churches—happen in our day to be far less ethical and rational, far more occult and doctrinal, than present-day preaching. The preaching even in orthodox churches, being in great part dependent upon the judgment of the preacher, has been more expressive of the needs of the hour than have the church services. It has more fully reflected the trend of the age, which is increasingly ethical and naturalistic. We are therefore liable to fall into the error of imagining that somehow preaching is necessarily more ethical and progressive than a set service. But this conclusion presupposes on the one hand that the set Anglican and Romish forms are the only type possible. On the other hand, it implies that preaching is necessarily ethical. This is the point of view held by Mr Joseph McCabe, who has cited the low moral stage of the Church in Spain to-day, and attributes it to the fact that there the Church has neglected preaching and had recourse almost exclusively to ceremonial. But had the ritual to which it had recourse embodied the ideas of social democracy and naturalistic humanism, it would have lifted not only the religion but the whole life of Spain out of the mire. On the other hand, what proof is there that Spanish priests, had they opened their mouths to preach in place of conducting formal services, would have inculcated the virtues of self-respect, intellectual honesty, democratic

equality, and reverence for the moral personality of women? What reason is there to suppose that they would have presented the moral character instead of the supernatural functions of Jesus Christ? It will be readily granted that in the historic Christian Churches the preaching is to-day for the most part more ethical and scientific than the services. It is the service that now retards sincerity and freedom of intellectual and moral faith. These old forms are concretions of the supernaturalism and the metaphysical doctrines of remote ages, together with ethical sentiments and human aspirations. But it is inconceivable that any preaching could be more ethical and more in accord with the spirit of science and of democracy than formal services expressly written or selected to embody the spirit of science and democracy.

The fact that the Anglican and Romish services are not up to the ethical and intellectual standard of our day and fall morally and scientifically far below the preaching of the most powerful living representatives of the Church, is one of the reasons which make it especially worth while to prepare a new manual of services. There was, for instance, to take a typical case, a glaring and pitiable incongruity, which was morally bewildering, between the Sunday morning services which were held in the summer of 1906 at the Farm Street Roman Catholic chapel in Mayfair and the sermons on "The Sins of Society" there delivered by the Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan. Gruesome and uncanny was to me the contrast between the springs of conduct which the preacher touched in his discourses on gambling and on the Magdalen of Mayfair and the weaknesses and emotions upon which the sacrifice of the Mass played. The spiritistic occultism, the supernaturalism, of this mysterious ceremony of the Real Presence had no more relation to the fundamental

presuppositions of Father Vaughan's sermon than the thoughts of a Caliban to the character of a Miranda. It was not the sensuous splendour of the form of the Mass that struck me as barbaric; but inhuman and immoral appeared the idea of the supernatural blood-atonement by contrast with the sermon.

In the same summer, at the Anglican Church in Vere Street, the Rev. Canon (now Dean) Page-Roberts was preaching. There a similar preposterous incongruity between sermon and service obtruded itself upon one's notice. Fifty minutes to an hour were devoted to a prostrate crying out to a supernatural agency—at least, so the worshippers themselves interpreted the ritual to mean—to save us; then one might have heard for twenty-five minutes a most searching sermon on the seventh commandment, teaching us to save one another and thereby save ourselves.

Let us concede, then, that the preaching of our day is comparatively not unethical or unscientific; it is the forms that are chiefly at fault. This stricture applies as fully to the free churches as to the Roman and Anglican communions, and as much to Quaker and Unitarian as to Presbyterian and Methodist practices. My impression as to the attitude of mind of Unitarian preachers towards the services which they are required or expected to conduct is that half of the preachers, except for their saving sense of humour and expectation of speedy revision, would be agonised in conscience by the compromise with supernaturalism to which the traditional forms compel them to submit.

If we consider the special case of the Church of England, we notice that only the Romanising party have had the insight to see that living ideas must penetrate not only the sermon but also the ritual. Accordingly they have

done their utmost even beyond the limits of legality to embody their peculiar convictions in ceremonial form. In this they have proved themselves to be statesmen, psychologists, and historians, as well as religious enthusiasts. They know the practical power of symbolism in conveying an idea into the heart and will of the people. Superficial and blind by contrast is the attitude of the Broad Church and the Evangelical parties, who know no better means of checking the Romanising tendency than by proving it illegal and preaching legality as the highest clerical duty. If they but knew it, the only efficient way by which the Romanising movement could be counteracted would be to legalise forms of service which should embody principles of democracy, science, and national idealism. Then the whole people would rise up in devotion to the Established Church. Along these lines of national idealism preaching is already permissible and is to be heard from many pulpits. But when once formal services congruous with such preaching are equally allowed, Evangelical Protestants will have something bigger and stronger to fear than Rome. They will have England herself to cope with—England awake as a living church. Towards this end a revised manual of services is more urgently needed than a new outburst of pulpit eloquence.

Those who have not long reflected upon the problem here under discussion may think that somehow formal services are in the nature of the case further behind the times than preaching. But this again is a mistake. Indeed, it is the survival of the old forms devised by Cranmer and his coadjutors which accounts for the fact that the preaching is not far more advanced than it is. Only the most daring and original preachers think beyond the forms. But in the day of Cranmer himself, and for

a generation afterwards, these forms did not cramp. Now, it is not of the essence of a formal service that it should have been perpetuated unchanged for three centuries. It is, as I point out elsewhere, perfectly possible that there should be an organised body of the best intellects and most spiritually minded souls of the Church continuously at work upon the revision of its services. And it would be possible that at stated intervals, a decade apart or less, the results of their labours should be submitted to the lawful authorities, and that those new forms which commended themselves should be sanctioned, and permission granted for their use side by side with old forms. There is nothing inherent in the nature of a State church or of church services to occasion the retention of any obsolete ideas or forms. Just as the criminal laws and civil statutes of the nation not only require but may receive constant revision, so with religious laws and statutes. Nowadays, under a democratic *régime*, it is inexcusable for any but embittered Anarchists to interpret all legislation as the tyrannical empire of past ages over the living present. Sane persons see that it is our own fault if we have not cast off the dictation of the dead and formulated embodiments of the social consciousness of our own day. In similar manner, before long, all except blind haters of social discipline of every kind will enthusiastically help to revivify the Church by revising and re-interpreting her liturgy.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME PREJUDICES AGAINST RELIGIOUS FORMS

As this volume is, in one aspect, an invitation to the public to give impartial consideration to the claims of Church services new in inward meaning and partly new in outward shape, it may not be superfluous to indicate what are the conditions which enable a person to judge competently of any ritual.

If anyone has been accustomed to the elaborate ceremonies of the Anglican Church and has derived his spiritual strength through them, he will be astonished, upon his attending a Quaker meeting for the first time, that human beings, apparently by nature of like susceptibilities with his own, could endure anything quite so dull and irritating as sitting speechlessly and motionlessly with others for ten, fifteen, yes, for thirty minutes together. But it becomes perfectly evident upon reflection that no one attending a Quaker meeting for the first time can be a competent judge of its ritual. Its effects upon him are entirely exceptional, and are the very opposite of those produced upon the minds of the Quakers themselves, or upon the minds of persons who, even though they be not believers in the principles taught by George Fox, have nevertheless in youth or in some other period of their life been accustomed to the Quaker meeting and grown

familiar with the mental side of its massive silences and unpremeditated outbursts of speech. Here are two opposite effects produced by the same ritual. That upon those habituated to it is peace, love, clearer insight, new power of self-control and of self-sacrifice. That upon the stranger is a feeling almost of repulsion and revulsion. The silence to him is empty, the motionlessness stupefying. The speeches and prayers bear none of that majestic poetry and manifest none of that mental vision which he has been wont to consider as the distinctive mark of utterances of the Most High. Of these two psychologically opposite effects, it is clear that the one which should be accounted the standard by which to judge of the ritual is that made upon the mind of the person who is familiar with it, and who, although he may not believe in, is not horrified or shocked by the inner meaning of the form.

If the High Churchman is making his first visit not to a Quaker meeting but, let us say, to an ethical society, an emotion of condescending patronage, if not kindly contempt, may stir his heart towards fellow-countrymen of his whose spiritual nature can be satisfied with anything so cold. Its coldness is what, indeed, not only Anglicans, but Methodists and Baptists, and perhaps others, are at first struck with at the so-called ethical service. But first visits are not to be trusted. The stranger may feel cold not because the atmosphere itself is below the blood-warm temperature of humanity, but because he has passed through infinite stretches of mental bleakness in trying to reach the point of view of these new worshippers of the moral sentiment. He has been chilled in leaving his own house and cannot on the instant be penetrated with the glow of his neighbour's hearth. Yet although he may never come again, he may for the rest of his life be

reporting among his friends the icy stiffness of ethical religion—all intellect and logic, no tenderness, no fire of enthusiasm, nothing personal, no belief even in personality or love, but only in abstract ideas, in moral philosophy, in discussion and controversy.

Yet it is possible that every heart but his own at that meeting of the ethical society was astir to its depths with the joy and agony of self-renouncing love. The same effect upon him was rendered impossible only by trivial circumstances. It is conceivable that the mere designation of the preacher at that meeting as an "ethical lecturer" concealed from the stranger the fact that every sentence uttered by the lecturer was aglow with the passion of the martyrs and luminous with the insight of the prophets. But both the words "ethical" and "lecturer" to describe a preacher are strange to the High Churchman. They form a totally new pigeon-hole among the compartments of his intellectual system. In that pigeon-hole nothing that he has ever known or loved or reverenced will spontaneously find its place. He has no power—to borrow the word of the psychologists and educationists of Germany—of "apperception" for things so labelled; and it is only according to their labels that the intellect at first classifies and groups its contents. An ethical lecturer—the very words prove that—must be something all intellect and no heart, all metaphysics and no life, self-made, and never having been breathed upon by the spirit of the ages and the beauty of the ideal. An "ethical lecture" must be so; therefore, when first heard, it is so. Likewise with the other formularies of an ethical service. What is this preposterous reading, not from Isaiah or St John, but from Plato or Browning? What a strange aberration, that anyone should mistake philosophy for religion, or poetry for prophecy! Poor,

benighted souls that have been allowed to wander from Morning and Evening Prayer, from the Psalter, Epistle and Gospel!

The first rule, then, to which the judge of a new liturgy must submit is that he make himself intimately familiar with it and suspend judgment until he has done so. I set forth this rule of criticism not only in order that my readers shall discount the prejudices which they might feel towards forms of the kind which I propose. Indeed, my chief motive for calling attention to this first canon of criticism is that persons who are wholly in sympathy with the fundamental ideas of what I call ethical religion, should prepare themselves to become appreciative and constructive critics of Roman Catholic rites, of the Anglican liturgy, of the forms of service prevalent in the free churches, and even of the ritual of the Greek Church. The St Paul-that-is-to-be of the humanitarian faith, if he need not become all things to all men, must know all things that work effectively upon all men and be willing to introduce every invention that shall foster spiritual energy. To prepare oneself for revision, scientific and democratic, instead of turning away in disgust from ritual priestly and occult, one must study it sympathetically, psychologically and sociologically. Whatever power for good or evil such ritual has had, it was due to elements within it which were purely natural in their operation. But these elements cannot be judged if they still awaken in us a feeling of revulsion due to strangeness. One who has studied them long enough to be rid of the sense of novelty will also find that he will have outgrown that well-nigh universal prejudice which shrinks from re-introducing in new connections any music or ceremonial act or use of furniture that can possibly in any way suggest any of the ecclesi-

astical machinery and methods of supernaturalistic organisations. Let a man judge of his own lack of culture as regards religious services, by the degree with which he shrinks in proud contempt from forms and ceremonies, the fundamental ideas of which he has discarded. It is bigotry and narrowness to transfer the dislike for a principle to the outward form in which that principle has been able to embody itself. That same form may be the best means also for the artistic incarnation of the opposite idea.

Probably more mischief is done by a failure to appreciate forms and ceremonies unfamiliar than by the inability to value aright those with which we are intimately but unpleasantly acquainted. The shrinking from the unfamiliar prevents our widening our acquaintanceship with religious expressions and recognising the possibilities of utilising those expressions for the communication of our own living faith. I am not sure but that it is more important for a man to gain an expert knowledge of the ceremonies of other religions than to become an authority in regard to his own. If ever a ritual arises so beautiful and full of meaning as to commend itself to the judgment of the British nation as a whole, it will have sprung out of the labours and insight of men who counted all the forms of all the religions of the world as material to be used and transformed to the needs of the nation.

The second rule for judging a ritual is that no one should attempt to do so by its effects upon himself, even after becoming intimately familiar with it, unless he really believes in the truth of the idea which it embodies. A ritual incorporating a notion which we believe to be false must be for us mere mummery unless for the time being we forget our own convictions. It must be re-

membered, however, that in mere mummery what is objectionable is not the form, not the ritual as such, but the false idea—false to us—which we see exercising over others what we believe to be a deplorable influence. The attack, therefore, in such a case, should never be upon the form. By sweeping that away one would not dry up the cause of pollution at its source. Those Protestants err who assail the forms instead of the substance of the Roman Catholic Church and deplore any approximation to them on the part of the Anglican communion. If the ideas which animate Anglican priests are the same as those which have found concrete embodiment in the Roman ritual, the attack should be directed against the ideas, not against the ceremonial embodiment. Indeed, the Anglican priest who entertains them but does not dare to do more than preach them, is more dangerous than the frank ritualist. Men who long to practise the Roman forms but abstain only because they are illegal add hypocrisy to heresy.

In short, nothing in a ritual which to us is absurd, because the idea which it embodies is absurd, should be counted as an objection to the ritual itself. A ritual is a means towards an end. The end is that a certain idea, which is in the mind of some persons, should be communicated powerfully to the minds of other persons. The means, or medium of communication, is ritual. But no deflection from truth inherent in the idea should be blamed against the medium which has been able to convey it. Only those distortions of the idea in the minds to be influenced which are due to defects in the bodily acts and the formularies of the ritual can justly be attached to it as their cause. We must not complain of the ceremony of the Mass in the Roman Catholic Church, if it succeeds in creating in the minds of the worshippers

an overpowering sense of the immediate presence of the living spirit of Jesus Christ in the consecrated elements; for that is the very idea which the Mass was meant to convey. If, in order to prevent the conveyance of that sense of the immediate presence of Christ, we attack the Mass, we must remember that we are overthrowing only the means by which the idea was communicated, and not the idea itself, nor the purpose in conveying it, which live in the minds of the Catholic priesthood. It is of infinite importance, in the policy of opponents of Roman Catholic teachings, that they shall not, in attacking the Mass, attack it on anti-ritualistic principles. Such a policy is suicidal. It would render impossible the concreting of Protestant principles or of rationalism into a cultus.

Instead of attacking a splendid ritual of an idea we hate, we ought, on the contrary, to feel towards it as the Government of one nation might towards some new device for military or naval defence which another nation had discovered and failed to keep secret. In spiritual warfare it is justifiable to rejoice when one is able to steal one's enemy's gunpowder. Every ritual of every doctrine I abhor shall teach me how to convey the doctrine I love. In judging of my spiritual enemy's ritual, therefore, I must not be biassed by the fact that for me it is mere mummery, or worse.

A third canon which should be borne in mind in order to correct a very natural error of prejudice is that no ritual should be judged by its effect upon us, even though we be familiar with it and though we count its teaching to be true, provided the truth it conveys is in our opinion of very little worth in the relative scale of human values. Ritual, as I point out elsewhere, is never concerned with anything but what are considered the supreme interests

and fundamental principles of existence. No ritual, therefore, which conveys a truth to us insignificant, can impress us. It will leave a distaste, a sense of triviality, of insipidity; and yet the form, both bodily act and words, may be quite perfect as ritual. A philosophic agnostic or rationalist, if he finds himself more intensely bored by the set forms of the Church of England than by the services of Nonconformists, ought to remember that this effect upon him is due to the greater efficiency of the more finely finished forms. They more powerfully convey to his mind the doctrines which he hates than do the less literary and classic prayers of the Dissenters.

In order to avoid the prejudice against a ritual due to the fact that the idea embodied in it is to us not true, or if true of insignificant value, we must put ourselves by force of sympathetic imagination in the position of the devout and enthusiastic worshipper. When we have done this, then are we able to detect just how much of the effect of the religion we are studying is to be traced to the idea itself and how much to the forms and ceremonies in which it is embodied. We also are then able to detect what elements in these are capable of complete detachment from the special ideas which they serve and can be appropriated by a religion which wholly discards trust in superhuman agencies as the source of moral inspiration.

Another rule which will aid towards an impartial judgment of any ritual is to bear in mind that it is not essential to it that it should be heard every day or twice every Sunday, or even once a week or once a month. Unhappily, the churches of our day which practise liturgy iterate and reiterate the same forms *ad nauseam*. Many, even, who devoutly believe the ideas conveyed, find the

forms intolerable. Therefore they either never go to church or do so but seldom ; or else they attend places where one cannot anticipate every detail of every bodily motion and every phrase that is to be said or sung. This weariness of very satiety from too frequent hearing and seeing of the same forms accounts for a very large part of the prevalent dislike of ritual ; and yet that dislike is purely accidental. If the Church of England should adopt quite different forms for morning and evening service for every morning and evening in the year—different anthems, a different order, different aspects of its great teachings—it is possible that Dissent of the kind which has prevailed for three centuries would almost disappear. It is also possible that persons whose moral idealism has outgrown the trammels of supernaturalistic presuppositions would begin to see the possibilities of a rationalistic ritual—and the necessity for it, if humanitarian idealism is to be conveyed with quickening power to the mind of the multitude.

In lieu of any such introduction of infinite and delightful variety into the ritual of the State Church, it would be well if those intelligently interested in the religious life of the nation would remember that the monotony which stamps ritual to-day is wholly extraneous to its essential nature. That monotony is an accident. The ritual of the future may reflect the exhaustless fullness of life itself and thus meet that intellectual need which psychologists call the law of variety.

It is as much the monotony of reiteration and uniformity and the lack of substitutes to be used at the discretion of the local clergy, as any difference of fundamental teaching or of Church government, that keeps the Dissenters aloof from the Church of England services. Yet this monotony is wholly adventitious, and has no connection either with

State establishment or with elaborateness of ritual. What we want is greater variety in church services and a large option granted to the officiating priest, together with a power in the hands of the bishop to introduce, according to local needs, new forms and ceremonies.

Yet it is exactly the opposite of any such liberty and variety which is advocated in the present day by those priests of the Church of England who are most cultivated in taste, most appreciative of ritual and most catholic and tolerant in doctrine. They are bringing about greater unity of practice by deifying, as it has not been deified for two centuries, the very letter of the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer. They are clamorously calling the attention of the public to the illegalities of the Evangelicals, as being far more a violation of the prescribed rules of the Prayer Book than any introduction by High Anglicans of illegal Romish forms. They are crying out for strict obedience. They are making it widely known that while in taking holy orders a man is allowed large intellectual freedom concerning the doctrines and formulæ of principles, he binds himself hand and foot, tongue and spirit, to the letter of the rubric as regards ritual. As an instance of this effort to bring the practices of the Church into still greater uniformity and to introduce greater frequency of repetition, I would cite the popular *Parson's Handbook*, by that admirable man and writer the Rev. Percy Dearmer. The sixth edition of this manual, revised and enlarged and beautified by new illustrations, has been published this year (1907). While writing the above sentences I have had before me a passage in his Introduction to the *Parson's Handbook*. This passage, which I take as typical of the dominant tendency among enthusiastic Churchmen, reads thus :—

"The cure, therefore, for most of our troubles and

deficiencies is to practise that loyal obedience to lawful authority which the clergy have promised to do in the solemn declaration of the amended Canon 36 :—

'I A. B. do solemnly make the following declaration ; I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ; I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God : and in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.'

"Two principles are here clearly set forth, as Archbishop Temple once pointed out. In the first place, the English Church does not now press doctrinal conformity to her own distinctive formulæ beyond the point of a general acceptance or 'assent' ; in the second place, she does require an undertaking as to ritual that admits of no compromise. Freedom to think, freedom to discuss, freedom to develop, are necessary to the very existence of life and truth in a Church ; but for the priest to omit or to alter the common services of that Church is fatal to the Christian fellowship, and robs the people of their rights."

In my judgment, Mr Dearmer is perfectly accurate. The official priest of the Church must conform, and ought to be compelled to conform, to the prescribed ritual of the Church. It is equally gratifying to be reassured that he is allowed the freedom to think, discuss and develop in doctrine and philosophy. But luckily the whole nation has not taken holy orders. Luckily, only some twenty-five thousand men in a population of forty millions of human beings have pledged themselves under oath or in any way never to omit or alter the common services of the Church. It would be fatal to allow any

liberty in this direction to the priest. But it would be still more fatal to deny perfect freedom in this direction to the people. So long as the forms prescribed remain prescribed, let the priest obey. But so long as the soul of the nation is alive, let it exercise its right by law to omit or alter any and every detail of the Church services wherever it can discover a better. The right of the people as a nation of worshippers to make new forms and ceremonies is one which a socialist like Mr Dearmer would recognise. We notice, further, in Canon 36, which he cites, the same recognition of the nation's power to order what shall be the forms of the Church. The priest is made to say, "I will use the form in the said Book . . . . *except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.*" The moment the people of England, the ultimate authority in everything lawful, orders some other form, the priest, unless the people allows an alternative, must use that. He is bound. But we, the people of England, are free. We, luckily, are in authority and may come to the rescue of the priests themselves.

One more caution may here be in place. A religious ritual may give us offence, we may find it dull, it may leave us apathetic, not because of any defect in itself as art or because of any falsehood or insignificance of value in its idea, but because it goes counter to some self-interest which we are unwilling to sacrifice to the interests of humanity at large. Our judgment may tell us that the idea conveyed is true and good and that the means by which it is conveyed are beautiful; and yet we may on this account be alarmed. Were the idea, by means of the ritual, to penetrate into our inmost self, we should be compelled to let go some treasure which we clutch. Let us imagine a person quite prepared in all other ways to appreciate the lines from George Eliot's *Spanish*

*Gipsy*, which I would suggest as an appropriate utterance for the opening of a baptismal rite when the Church has become humanistic. The lines are these :—

> Ours is a faith
> Taught by no priest, but by our beating hearts :
> Faith to each other ; the fidelity
> Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
> Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
> Nay, in the silent bodily presence, feel
> The mystic stirrings of a common life
> Which makes the many one.

The truth, the righteousness and the beauty of these words may be felt to be unimpeachable, and on that very account may be hateful to a person who, despite his better nature, loathes too close contact with his fellowmen—"the great unwashed." Liberty, equality and fraternity are all very well in the abstract and as a watchword of a political party ; but an actual fraternity, with poetic enthusiasm inculcating equality, and in its rite of admission to membership committing everyone to full recognition, as social equals, of the promiscuous crowd who make up the congregation, is quite beyond the powers of sacrifice of many a refined, exclusive humanist. Yet let such an one not assign the resentment which he would feel upon hearing these lines in a church service, as a reason against ritual in general, or against this form in particular. Rather let him purge his own habits of heart, or else suspend judgment.

Another prejudice inevitably confronts one who asks the public to sanction innovations in ritual. No form of common worship will stand being rendered so inartistically as to offend the æsthetic susceptibilities of those present. Yet it is often impossible that new rites and ceremonies should at first be rendered under circumstances and by

persons trained and gifted to do them æsthetic justice. It is therefore generally necessary, and is only just, that a critic hearing a new ritual imperfectly rendered should discount the imperfections of the rendering and not attribute to the special form offences not inherent in it but attributable to defects of execution. An exquisite poem or magnificent prose utterance may be so stammeringly spoken, in so unpleasant a voice, with such unintelligence of inflection and intonation, as to make it almost impossible for the most discriminating listener to see and realise the literary worth and beauty or the moral dignity of the composition or the possibility of its being impressively rendered. A certain degree of skill in reading must be evinced before even a fair jury would be able to pronounce a just judgment upon the thing spoken. So difficult is it to separate the incidental defects of execution and appreciate the possibilities and the effects of a perfect rendering. What is true of mere elocution is to a greater degree the case in regard to instrumental and vocal music. The general public never discriminates between bad music and a bad rendering of good music. But a critic of new and unfamiliar forms of public worship must train himself to at least sufficient discrimination to enable him to know when the rendering is the cause of offence. If he cannot imagine how the ritual would impress him if it were well executed, he can then at least suspend judgment until he does hear and see it done well.

The old-established religions possess an enormous but unfair advantage in those centres where the rich assemble. They can command the best music, the finest architecture and windows, and priests whose voice and enunciation of English are most agreeable. The further one goes from the churches where the aristocratic and wealthy worship,

the more one finds not only ideas which would offend their intellectual and moral preconceptions, but also forms and renderings of forms which would outrage their æsthetic standards. The classes most cultivated æsthetically have nevertheless not had enough intellectual training to be self-critical. They attribute to forms and ideas which offend them crudities and vulgarities of presentation which may by no means inhere in the ideas and forms themselves. These crudities and vulgarities may be wholly due to the poverty and the lack of outward resources of those who believe in the ideas embodied. It is quite clear, then, as a canon for the criticism of new religious forms, that one must either hear them well and adequately rendered or else be able to set aside all prejudices due to defects of execution and imaginatively realise how the forms would affect the mind when properly said and sung under favourable surroundings.

Still another caution must be given for the guidance of the critic of new religious forms and proposed revisions of old. Ritual, like the drama, can only be judged when it is—so to speak—staged and performed. The items of the rite and the directions of the rubric when merely read in a book will not disclose their possibilities even to an expert executant of rituals. It is a commonplace of experience, that until a drama is actually performed nobody can tell how it will "take." The dramatist himself does not know. Actors and stage-managers are proverbially liable to erroneous judgment. They reject pieces which prove afterwards the greatest successes, and are ready to expend vast sums of money on the performance of plays which everyone after the first night wonders could ever in the private reading have misled anyone.

There is no occasion for us to enter into the essential

differences of a literary composition when read in a book and when acted and recited on a stage or in a church. But the difference is astonishingly great for everyone. A drama or a religious rite in the pages of a book is to its performance or celebration very much as a corpse to a living body. They are alike and yet startlingly dissimilar. A sentence or a ritualistic sign takes on new and unexpected life and energy the moment it is uttered or enacted before a public assembly convened for that purpose.

## CHAPTER V

### EFFORT AND ADAPTATION IN THE GROWTH OF LITURGIES

It must be borne in mind that suitable modes of devotional service will never come of themselves. They will not be hit upon by happy accident. And without a mighty struggle on their behalf, they will never be introduced either into the historic or into new religious organisations. Even in the latter there will always be a strong party opposing outward forms. It may be, as Emerson says, that

> The litanies of nations came,
> Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
> Up from the burning core below—
> The canticles of love and woe.

It certainly is true, as he says, that

> Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old.

But false would be the inference that, because the litanies come naturally out of human love and woe, they therefore come without effort, purpose, and plan. If the volcano's tongue of flame does not issue by design, it is in so far not like the litanies of nations in its energising force.

The belief prevails that litanies spring out unintended from unconscious impulses. And when persons undertake to-day, by effort and with beneficence prepense, to

make or re-make litanies suited to the new needs, they are met with the scornful rebuke that religions cannot be manufactured—that they are not made but grow.

There is no doubt in my own mind that the progress of religion into a democratic and scientific scheme of moral regeneration has been retarded for ages by the notion, never allowed by priests to die, that religious forms and ceremonies cannot be invented and manufactured. This notion, kept alive by conservative interests, and sincerely believed because accepted without question by the multitude, is doomed soon to be exploded. For the fact is writ large on every page of Church history, and in the narrative of all great religions, and needs only to be known, that so long as religions have been alive and growing, the vital force which produced their teachings and practices has been the conscious effort of bold, patriotic statesmen. These saw that ethics, whether pure or impure—ethics somehow, the best they could have—must forthwith be concreted into the most attractive, vivid and inspiring cultus they were able to devise. Churches have always and everywhere manufactured their ritual.

Nevertheless, it is true that the ritual is a natural growth. Human manufactures always grow. Unless one is admitted into the secret of the psychic forces that create them, they bear all the marks of spontaneous, unpremeditated development. Religious statesmen construct them as inevitably (although designedly) as the wood-bird weaves her nest

> Of leaves and feathers from her breast ;

or as

> the fish outbuilds her shell,
> Painting with morn each annual cell ;

or as

> the sacred pine-tree adds
> To her old leaves new myriads.

It is hazardous to affirm that bird and fish and tree quite spontaneously and unconsciously construct their temples for body and home. The finest and closest observers of animal and plant life are more and more hesitating to believe so. There is no proof of unconsciousness or effortlessness. Both in the case of plant and animal it is an unfounded assumption to deny even effort. And as regards all beautiful forms of religion, what we do know of them from intimate and universal experience and direct observation is this : that they have come first by the effort of patriots ; then they may have continued spontaneously, and probably only at last survived unconsciously. We know further that the unconscious production of beautiful things is no more worthy nor admirable than activity which is all tingling with conscious spontaneity. It is also a perversion of judgment, due to conservative self-interest, to cast discredit upon laborious effort as compared with spontaneity, whether conscious or unconscious. Let the results of agonising enterprise be compared only in their beauty and utility with products of effortless impulse and not prejudged adversely because they have cost self-control, sacrifice and the concentration of intelligent will.

It has not been to the interest of the official priests of churches to acknowledge that forms and ceremonies, liturgies and Bibles, grew by a process of revision. Accordingly, they did not see this process, and they honestly fancied that the products of ceremonial art sprang quite otherwise into existence. But anyone not biassed knows that the same process is exemplified in the religious forms of every nation. Nowhere is it more fully exemplified than in the origin and development of the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Admirably has Emerson presented the facts and appreci-

ated them in this passage from his essay on Shakespeare :— "It is easy to see that what is best written or done by genius in the world was no man's work, but came by wide social labour, when a thousand wrought like one, sharing the same impulse. Our English Bible is a wonderful specimen of the strength and music of the English language. But it was not made by one man, or at one time ; but centuries and churches brought it to perfection. There never was a time when there was not some translation existing. The liturgy, admirable for its energy and pathos, is an anthology of the piety of ages and nations, a translation of the prayers and forms of the Catholic Church—these collected, too, in long periods, from the prayers and meditations of every saint and sacred writer all over the world. Grotius makes the like remark in respect to the Lord's Prayer, that the single clauses of which it is composed were already in use in the time of Christ, in the Rabbinical forms. He picked out the grains of gold."

But there is a still more pertinent hint in this same essay of Emerson's, to encourage and embolden to revision those who feel that during the last two centuries and a half the people of England have been denied the right to breathe the breath of their new life into their national liturgy and to let that new life reshape, as it must, those forms which are inadequate. "Shakespeare," says Emerson, "in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done." I know the retort will be made that this was all very well for Shakespeare and his immortal comrades, but that until a man has demonstrated that he is the peer of Shakespeare he has no right to lay his unconsecrated

hand upon the sacred literary heritage of the past. But note that Emerson insists that even Shakespeare, for all his greatness, could have done nothing had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy prevented his esteeming the mass of old plays waste stock. If Emerson be right, Shakespeare's greatness itself, or at least the world's possession of his greatness, was due to the liberty taken by him of experimenting freely with the literature he found at hand.

Once let the devout world be converted to the dignity and necessity of human effort in the writing of Bibles and in the formulation of religious cults, and in a century religion will make more progress in beauty, reasonableness and humanity than it has done in two thousand years. The notion that sacred scriptures emanate from supernatural agencies and that rites are enjoined by invisible intelligences, has generally paralysed by suggestion the efforts of religious reformers. These have waited for that to be done by superhuman persons which they ought to have undertaken forthwith. But luckily this erroneous notion is losing hold of intelligent minds.

With the shifting of trust from supernatural to human agencies, we abandon the idea that independently of us the universe has a purpose which we are to serve. But the notion that we therefore abandon all belief in rational cosmic purpose and fall back upon blind evolution is as crude as it is dangerous to the higher interests of humanity. In abandoning superhuman personal agencies we do not fall back upon sub-human and impersonal or even merely human forces. No human will is merely human will ; it is also natural, just as all nature is subject to the forms and laws of the human mind. Instead, we replace the idea of extra-human cosmic purpose by that of human cosmic purpose—humanity being

the crown of the cosmos. Combined human foresight —the general will of organised society—assumes the rôle of creative providence.

Consistent with this new conception of the Church and of human design as a factor in religious evolution is it that we should appropriate and adapt the materials furnished us by the rites and ceremonies of the historic Church. We who love the Church and are true to its spirit are rightful masters of its letter. As the wood-bird, bent on building her nest, in lieu of better materials makes it of leaves and of feathers from her breast, so may we use what is familiar, old, and close at hand. It is all ours, and the homelike beauty of the Church of the future will be enhanced by the ancient materials wrought into its new forms.

The right to appropriate and modify materials at hand to serve new needs has only been exercised in the few and short periods of creative work in Church organisation —those who effected the changes believing themselves to be guided by some supernatural agency. By such men at such times no forms or symbols were counted too holy to be touched. There is little doubt that out of the Creed of Irenæus (A.D. 170) was built up the Apostles' Creed, through the deliberate attempts of many. This in turn was worked over into the Nicene Creed, to meet the new attacks of heretics by rendering explicit various points of Church doctrine. The Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds must have been held in execration as an unpardonable parody by those who on principle opposed all tampering with authorised documents. The Nicene Creed itself soon becoming inadequate as an instrument of Church defence, the Athanasian Creed was constructed out of two existing formulæ as to the nature of God and of Christ.

In the case of these creeds, there was no deviation in the new statements from the old meanings—only a bringing out of what was implicit and understood, or the addition of new materials to buttress the old. Yet the right to appropriate and modify has not been confined to cases where the old idea was preserved. The early Christians put quite different meanings into the words "Messiah" and "the Kingdom of Heaven," as into the use of one day of rest in seven and into the Passover Supper. They did not stop short of appropriating anything that would serve their cause.

It is not only creeds that have been reshaped and bent to serve new needs; the same has been done with prayers and hymns. It is sometimes supposed that these latter, being lyric and emotional, have spontaneously sprung into existence, and, being living organisms rather than mechanical structures, cannot be modified without laceration. But such a distinction of creeds as compared with prayers and hymns is wholly without foundation in fact. The most subtle and metaphysical of all the creeds, the Athanasian, is itself a superb psalm, and as such is used by the Church. It is a living organism, but we must remember that in matters spiritual the life-force is often conscious effort and intelligent design. As to hymns, whoever is intimately acquainted with the evolution of anthologies is perfectly aware that the lyrics undergo modification the moment the intellectual soil and environing atmosphere have become changed. What is more to the point, the most sweetly lyrical of all Christian hymns, those of John and Charles Wesley, found their origin in a systematic intellectual scheme. The Wesleys wished to embody their peculiar theological doctrines in a form which should become familiar to the masses. The hymn was the one possible popular vehicle.

Accordingly, the whole of the Methodist scheme of salvation was poured into melodious rhyme. As regards the spontaneous perfection, and therefore inviolability, of prayers, it must not be forgotten that a number of the prayers in the English Prayer Book are compilations.

Church literature cannot and must not be the product of individual and isolated minds. It still must be, as it always has been, the work of a continuous group of organisers and worshippers thinking and feeling together like one mind and embodying their common sentiment in fitting formulæ. One person pre-eminent in logical clearness throws out the new idea ; another soul gifted with song breathes into it the breath of life. By use the substance becomes strengthened and compact. Church literature has thus the characteristics of folk-lore.

A redeeming circumstance in such appropriation, as compared with the seizing of material wealth, is that the old still survives intact under the former ownership, after it has been taken and adapted by innovators. The Jewish use and meaning of the words "Messiah" and "the Kingdom of Heaven," as of the institutions of the Sabbath and the Passover, were not extinguished, but were compelled to compete henceforth with what the Jews would have called parodies.

There was a similar seizure by the early Christians of pagan materials—festivals and phrases, as well as temples.

At the Reformation, likewise, when the Church of England was organising herself as an independent body, she took every form and phrase she wanted, modifying language and rite by omissions and additions and by the introduction of fresh ideas and meanings, according to the living sentiments of the hour. "In the Mass," says an historian of the Book of Common Prayer, "the order and

contents of the Sarum service were adhered to, but stress was laid upon the communion of the people, by the incorporation of the 'Order of Communion,' and the Canon was practically re-written, expressions being omitted which would be thought to countenance the doctrine of a repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross, and the then prevalent form of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. . . . The direct invocation of saints and expressions connected with the mediæval doctrine of the state of the departed also disappeared."

Only in these great creative periods of national religious life have existing materials been intentionally transfused with new meanings and reshaped. In periods of timid conformity thinkers have seen what needed doing but have not dared, or have not cared, to do it. At most someone has prophesied that another would come, who, being bolder, would do instead of announcing what ought to be done.

All persons likely to be interested in the revision of the Book of Common Prayer might for our purpose be conveniently divided into two classes, as the obstacles to revision besetting each of these are quite different: clergymen and literary laymen.

Such is the peculiar position of the clergyman under the Act of Uniformity that he cannot well conceive anyone's beginning the work of re-adapting the services of the Church to the future needs of the nation until the Church itself, with the nation's sanction, has moved in the matter and authorised and appointed a various body of men to undertake the task.

There can be no doubt that thousands of the clergy deplore their bondage to the rubric and the absence of permission to bishops to authorise alternatives to various portions of the services. But those who thus regret

their bondage can do nothing more specific than express their regret ; and this they are continually but ineffectually doing. Typical of these expressions are the letters which recently appeared in the *Spectator*. One contains the following passage :—" How different would have been the history of the Christian Church in England if the compilers of the nation's Book of Common Prayer had definitely fixed some date, such as the first year of every century, for its revision ! They made no secret of the fact that their work would periodically need to be brought up to date. Were they not themselves revising venerated liturgies, handed down to them, in order that they might be better adapted to the knowledge and the needs of the people of England in their own day ? Would not the arguments which they used in their Preface to convince gainsayers be equally applicable to future generations ? They both knew and foreknew the hold of customary forms and phrases over men's minds. They had seen and must have foreseen the danger 'lest one good custom should corrupt the world.' . . . Who can doubt that as godly a body of men of piety and learning will be found for the task to-day as at any period of the Church's history ? Even Church doctrine, which is spoken of sometimes as if it were a petrified tradition, means neither more nor less than the teaching of the living Church of the day, as expressed in authorised formularies by the help of the living Spirit. Such formularies must be kept in constant refreshing touch with the heart and mind of the nation if the national Church is to be worthy of its name, and not decline and fall into a mere denomination among denominations. The sense in which the compilers of our Prayer Book meant Church doctrine to be 'distinctive'—a much-abused word, surely—was chiefly, if I mistake not, in its simple, broad and therefore com-

prehensive character. It was their ambition that all Christian people should be able to use the services supplied with comfort and profit, whether their family tradition and personal leaning inclined them to Rome or to Geneva."

How pathetically handicapped must be the man who would attribute the inactivity of the Church since 1662 in this work of revision to the mere negative fact that the compilers omitted to fix a definite date, such as the first year of every century, for revision! That omission surely can be no cause for the apathy and stolid conservatism of the Church. That omission cannot be binding upon the Church.

And what good would a fixed date, once in a century, for revision be, if during the ten decades preceding there had not been the liberty given to each of the bishops, if not to the rector of every church, to compose and use, besides the authorised forms, others, according to his own genius and the seeming requirements of those to whom he ministered? A revision that could not be tested by actual experience in common worship, although it were the work of a great poetic prophet, might fail absolutely. Forms for actual use in church, like plays for actual performance upon the stage, presuppose on the part of those who devise them intimate acquaintance with the stage management and the actual performance, so to speak, of the ritual. I will not say but that it would be better than the present inactivity if after every hundred years there should be five of hurried effort to improve the rites of the Church. But the very spirit which would promote such periodical revisions would be sure to sanction the continuous tentative work of recognised authorities in the Church.

If such privileges were conferred upon the bishops, what

a stimulus would be brought to bear upon all the literary geniuses born to the nation! As the Church has called into requisition the creative powers of architects, painters and musicians, so it would at last be summoning to its service the greatest lyric and dramatic poets. Suppose Shakespeare had been called as were Raphael and Michel Angelo. Or Milton, or George Eliot, or Browning! But to return to the painful facts. Nobody in the Church for more than two centuries has tried to construct any kind of a religious ritual. Our only hope lies in the fact that to-day what demand there is for revision is more outspoken and widespread than ever before. Yet, except among clergymen themselves, there is no evidence of any great demand for revision; and among the clergy the motive is more to save their own consciences than to serve the nation's crying spiritual need.

Literary laymen are either active conformists or they belong to one of a thousand varieties of nonconformity. If they be active conformists, the chances are ninety-nine to one that they are already satisfied. If they are nonconformists, they have no interest in a great national ritual. They either call only for forms suitable to a special denomination and satisfying the conscious demands of those who naturally are satisfied with it, or they would not remain in it; or, like thousands of literary, philosophic and scientific minds, they have withdrawn from all fellowship in religious devotion. Among such as these there are a few who still regard religion, not as a private concern, but as the nation's supreme interest. But their very remoteness from the organised life and thought of the Established Church prevents their sentiments from taking the form of an active ecclesiastical propaganda, and delays indefinitely the application of their literary gifts to the elaboration of forms of communal devotion.

Such was the characteristic attitude of the more cultivated freethinking minds of the nineteenth century. Almost superstitious and in direct contradiction to their disbelief in an over-ruling Providence was their waiting, instead of doing.

Even the belief in an inevitable upward evolution of human institutions could not justify their notion that religious forms would adapt themselves without effort to the new demands of science. Without a struggle for existence between the old and the new in the persons of the champions of each, how could the new gain a permanent foothold? But before there can be a struggle for existence, that which is to struggle must exist. And how could a new creed or litany or hymn or order of religious service enter into competition with the old, unless first someone had thought it out and written it down and published it and defied public opinion to the extent of—so to speak—performing it at meetings of those who believed it better and truer than the old?

Fully illustrative of this attitude of waiting for some other to do what needs now to be done in liturgy is the following passage from Mr John Morley's volume entitled *On Compromise* (which, let me say, has not been without its influence as one of the causes of this book) :—

"The tendency of modern free thought," said Mr Morley, writing in 1877, "is more and more visibly towards the extraction of the first and more permanent elements of the old faith, to make the purified material of the new. When Dr Congreve met the famous epigram about Comte's system being Catholicism minus Christianity, by the reply that it is Catholicism plus Science, he gave an ingenious expression to the direction which is almost certainly taken by all who attempt, in

however informal a manner, to construct for themselves some working system of faith, in place of the faith which science and criticism have sapped. In what ultimate form, acceptable to great multitudes of men, these attempts will at last issue, no one can now tell. For we, like the Hebrews of old, shall all have to live and die in faith, 'not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and being persuaded of them, and embracing them, and confessing that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Meanwhile, after the first great glow and passion of the just and necessary revolt of reason against superstition have slowly lost the exciting splendour of the dawn, and become diffused in the colourless space of a rather bleak noonday, the mind gradually collects again some of the ideas of the old religion of the West, and willingly, or even joyfully, suffers itself to be once more breathed upon by something of its spirit. Christianity was the last great religious synthesis. It is the one nearest to us. Nothing is more natural than that those who cannot rest content with intellectual analysis, while awaiting the advent of the St Paul of the humanitarian faith of the future, should gather up provisionally such fragmentary illustrations of this new faith as are to be found in the records of the old. Whatever form may be ultimately imposed on our vague religious aspirations by some prophet to come, who shall unite sublime depth of feeling and lofty purity of life with strong intellectual grasp and the gift of a noble eloquence, we may at least be sure of this, that it will stand as closely related to Christianity as Christianity stood closely related to the old Judaic dispensation."

By following the hint contained in Dr Congreve's formula for Positivism, the religion advocated in this book might be described as Christianity plus Science plus

Social Democracy. The task of one who would compile Church services in harmony with such a formula would, if he but had the destructive and constructive imagination, be simple enough: to strike out of existing forms everything that offends against social democracy and against science, and to add all that is necessary in order to instruct and inspire the public mind with the spirit and method, the ideal and goal, of knowledge devoted to social service.

But we dare not wait for the genius who is equal to the imaginative destruction and construction that are needed. We must prepare for his coming. The discoveries and inventions of the greatest minds always have foundation in the thousands of minor contributions, half-successes and experiments that failed but taught avoidance of the same mistake. It is not only "natural," it is necessary, that we should gather up the illustrations of the new faith to be found in the old. In so doing, we are not simply beating time while awaiting the advent of the St Paul of the humanitarian faith of the future; we are actually securing his coming and preventing its indefinite postponement.

One would have thought that, since Mr Morley published *On Compromise*, countless experiments along the line of concreting Dr Congreve's formula would have been made; and that now we should have the results to profit by. But nothing has been done, except by Dr Congreve himself; and the general tone seems more timid than ever.

It is probable also that Dr Congreve's attempt at adapting old forms to the new idea of faith in humanity has injured rather than advanced his cause. He started from the wrong motive. He confesses his object in adaptation to be to make his own expression in its form continuous

with the religious worship of the Christian churches. But this is a vitiating aim. The one object should have been to make his own expression adequate to its own idea, and to borrow not at all because it is desirable to preserve an outward semblance of similarity. If there is to be borrowing, it must be wholly because the thing appropriated is in itself the best possible material. If outward similarity, without being sought for, happens to be preserved, well and good. But the slightest suspicion that the similarity is only outward and not due to inward identity is fatal—and rightly so.

It was this longing to preserve an appearance of outward continuity that led Dr Congreve in the first place to over-value the mere prayer-form of petition. In the second place, it tempted him to transfer not the ethical and positivistic elements of the Catholic rites to his own ritual, but the very opposite peculiarities—the fantastic and sentimental. Doubtless Comte himself, in his inordinate vanity, is partly to blame. He led Dr Congreve astray. For instance, he expressed the desire that he should go down to posterity associated in the hearts of his disciples with the names of the good women he had revered. Now, in the Catholic system the memory of Jesus is associated intimately with that of his mother and several other women. How easy, then, to preserve a parallel between Catholicism and Positivism, if one were to formulate a prayer in which Comte is similarly associated! The result is the most monstrous absurdity ever perpetrated by a really great and good man. On page 34 of Dr Congreve's book of services for the Church of Humanity is his prayer of communion with Comte. It ends in this fashion :—

> Thou art out of reach of our service too. Yet was there a recompense thou didst desire—that thy guardian angels should

live on in thy life, their names be united with thine, honoured and cherished in the Church which thou didst found.

One faithful woman taught thee to believe in Woman, and she survived thee, loving and mourning thee till her death.

Another, whom thou didst survive, called out thy deepest tenderness and devotion, and so revealed to thee the highest secret of Humanity, the perfect harmony of religion founded on love.

But to-day we commemorate chiefly her of whom we know least, her who bears the holiest name of all, who transmitted to thee those seeds of tenderness which others fostered, whose influence, dimmed awhile, yet resumed its early sway over thee in thy later years, the "noble," the "admirable," the "venerable," thy "very tender" Mother, Rosalie Boyer. *Amen.*

Here we have Catholicism plus something, but certainly not science. Could anything ever have been done by a malicious enemy to injure the cause of the ritual of Positivism more than this superficial imitation? One would have thought that a wise admirer, instead of exposing to view Comte's self-conscious posing and vain desire for homage, would have done his utmost instead to cover this pitiable weakness from public gaze. One feels quite certain that, however reverence for the Virgin Mary and other women grew up in the course of time, the Founder of Christianity never proposed such a grouping of them with him.

This deplorable although well-intentioned blunder on the part of Dr Congreve has undoubtedly been one of the chief causes why his "Church of Humanity" has not grown and flourished during the last fifty years, but on the contrary continues pathetically a frail and ever-decreasing vitality. It is not to be wondered at that those who on several grounds found themselves unable to work in intimate co-operation with him have shown a hyper-sensitive dread of anything like Positivist ritual, and have done their utmost that the community at large

should forget that there is such a body of Positivists in existence as the Church of Humanity.

This prayer from which I have quoted is not an isolated instance of a fantastic resemblance preserved in order to indicate by parallelism a continuity where there was none. It is well-nigh inconceivable that a Positivist and Englishman should, for example, have borrowed the idea of the Virgin Mother from the Roman Catholic scheme and imagined that he would be helping to gain favour in the eyes of the British public for Humanity, if he transferred this idea to it. Yet what Dr Congreve actually did was nothing less than this. The opening words of his prayer for the Festival of Holy Women are, "Queen of our devotion, Humanity, thou Virgin Mother, who hast presided over all the efforts of thy children," and so forth. Again, under the heading "A Prayer to Humanity," one reads, "Thou thyself hast no peer, no companion. On this home of all of us, the Earth, in the Space that enfolds it, thou workest by thyself alone. We worship thee then as Virgin as well as Mother.

"Virgin Mother, conform us in thy likeness. May we shed around us something of the tenderness we feel in thee. May we lay aside all selfish desires, and so day by day become more pure in our affections, our thoughts and deeds. So shall we serve our generation and advance thy kingdom. *Amen.*"

My readers may wonder whether the cause for which I am pleading may not be injured even by calling attention to the absurdities into which one good man fell through his desire to invent forms and adapt old material for a new ritual. But it is most important that in commending adaptation I should wholly dissociate myself from what I consider to be a radically false and pernicious method. It is necessary to make quite clear what ought not to be

done, and thus by contrast to indicate the legitimate lines of adaptation. What we may appropriate from the old is what was always purely naturalistic and human. It would be a legitimate appropriation to take into a naturalistic form of initiation into a church, some of the ethical ideas and phrases from the preliminary invitation of the Church of England Communion service. But this is just the kind of material which Dr Congreve never by any chance seemed to think of appropriating.

The general attitude towards the making of liturgies, even on the part of persons most in sympathy with humanistic religion, is well exemplified by one distinguished writer of our immediate present, who has published this curious betrayal of halting between two opinions: "A ritual," he says, "cannot be invented; antiquity appears to be of the essence of its power—though, to be sure, rituals must have had a beginning!—and, as experiment shows, it is difficult to take seriously any new attempt in this direction." If rituals had a beginning, to the starters of them they must have been most powerful. There was no antiquity hallowing the custom of those who in memory of Christ first broke bread and drank wine. And yet how thrilling, how overpowering, must have been this new experiment in ideal communion! Antiquity is not of the essence of ritual. On the contrary, old rituals keep themselves alive and quicken us in spite of their antiquity. And it is only because we lack courage and creative originality of faith that we halt. Religion is monopolised to-day by vested interests, which spread it abroad against us if we attempt to bring up the form to the living faith. We are tasteless innovators, it is reported—vulgar nonconformists.

"Though, to be sure, rituals must have had a beginning," yet undoubtedly experiment shows that it is

difficult to take seriously any new attempt in this direction. Nobody that was anybody took seriously—at least, not for several centuries—that breaking of bread in memory of Jesus. Evidently it began in a circle so removed from the refinement and power of the worshippers of antiquity as never to have heard that the experiment was ludicrous. Beneficent crudity! Yet let us again forget the periods of timid conformity, let us again drink of the spirit of prophecy; let us save what is worth saving in Christianity and the Church, by keeping everything that is consistent with science and true to the vision of social democracy and discarding the rest.

Devoted as I am to the purpose and spirit of the Hebrew prophets and Christian Apostles, and convinced that a transference of religious faith from superhuman to human agencies does not touch the essential message of the Bible and the Church, I have dared to think of myself in publishing this plea for revision as in a line of Church-reforming successors to Cranmer, the arch-appropriator and adapter of ancient forms to new meanings. I would fain hasten that reformation of the Reformation which Milton prophesied—and a vital part of the work of which must be a new Book of Common Prayer.

I have said that, if I do not believe in waiting for the St Paul of the humanitarian faith, it is because I believe that we must prepare the way for him or he will never come. And I am not without hope that this volume may lead to experiments in revision and to original forms, created rather than compiled. The chief glory of each output of such successive efforts will be that it helped to bring forth that which deserved to supersede it. I anticipate that men of the highest ability—poets lyric and dramatic, patriot-musicians like Wagner, statesmen who are also orators and prophets, men of more than

Renaissance versatility—will some day create a Church ritual which for music, eloquence and action, for closeness to experience, depth of meaning, scope of vision, elevation of sentiment and reach of purpose, will transcend any art that the world as yet has known.

The preparation of the way for the St Paul of the humanitarian faith of the future must consist in creating a demand for Church services which only great literary and religious genius can produce. We are apt to overlook the fact that men of original and constructive mind in any age bring forth works of art after the kind which the public opinion of that age effectively demands. The Elizabethan era required simply the patching up of the Roman Catholic liturgies in the spirit of cautious and insincere compromise. No wonder, then, that the poets, like Spenser and Shakespeare, and the thinkers and masters of prose, like Richard Hooker and Francis Bacon, did not bestow their gifts upon the Church's forms, but enriched instead the leisured ease of ladies and gentlemen, the people of the pit, the scholars and the expert investigators of the laboratory. The hasty and shrewd adaptations and revisions of Cranmer were enough for the English nation in her new self-consciousness as a Church. But it is inconceivable that Shakespeare and the rest of his kind would not have responded to her call, had she but called.

Let the situation in all its realism be kept clearly in mind. By an effective demand is meant one not merely sentimental, not one that simply lauds and honours the poet with wreaths of bay. It is one which secures him a better livelihood than he can win by turning his genius to any other application of his art. Men of genius rightly are drawn to that domain where they can find most honour, most recognition, the greatest leisure, the fullest

trust, the completest command of all the materials needed and the widest scope for the realisation of ideas and the manifestation of their creative power. Constructive artists are not original thinkers who defy and stem the main currents of their age. On the contrary, they are most sensitive to the drift. What they think and feel and do is an index of the newest life and impulse of the times. And the test of the times is the effective demand which they make upon the artist.

Those of us, therefore, who have not the poet's nor musician's nor dramatist's gift may at least offer such inducements or contribute our share towards such active public opinion as will appeal to the love of fame, opportunity, and security of life which are the legitimate motives that direct genius. It is a lamentable characteristic of our age that the new faith, the humanitarian idealism, seems to lack understanding of the means towards the realisation of its great end. In striking contrast to its impracticality is the efficient grip of conservative religionists upon means for bolstering up obsolete doctrines and symbols. Illustrative of the whole question here under consideration was the remark of a famous designer of stained-glass windows. He was a man scientifically trained and imaginative, in sympathy with all the newer ideals of the people. Yet the best years of his life were spent in designing for church windows, and painting in wonderful harmonies of colour, illustrations of the cosmogony and cosmology of the first chapters of Genesis, of the weird conceptions of angels found in Ezekiel, and of the New Testament miracles—in no one of which he believed. When asked how he could and why he should lavish beauty upon and thus perpetuate ideas and ideals which he counted not only false but pernicious, he replied, "The patrons of my art give me

orders for these things, whereas the believers in the ideals which I entertain as a religion send me no orders for any enshrinements in beauty of their principles and visions."

But the day will soon come when the dreamers of new dreams for the benefit of man will demand and obtain from men of genius concrete embodiments of the new thought and new hope. To put it bluntly, what we are to do is to go straight to the poets of all sorts and tell them what we want. We should begin with the great writers of our day. Many of them are eminently adapted to do for the Church of England something infinitely greater than mere revision—to body forth in unexpected forms the national idealism of our day. We who demand cannot even give a hint of what it is we want as regards actual structure. That it is the poet's function to discover. It is enough that we communicate our idea and our need.

The best writers of our time are all gone astray on lines infinitely less congenial to their specific genius than would be the creation of a litany and of various special rites to express the aspiration and buoyant confidence of the rising social democracy, of woman, and of childhood. Take the case of that profoundly passionate prophet of the new life, Mr Israel Zangwill. His little book of poems, entitled *Blind Children*, exhibits such strength and closeness of phrase as belong to sentences to be repeated scores of times a year for hundreds of years by multitudes of men. The passion of his poetry is of the ethic order. Yet this little book is as nothing to what he might do. Besides it, he has given us novels which will have their day and cease to be. The most effectual demand now made of his genius is that by the Jews in their desire for political independence as a nation. The

result is that Mr Israel Zangwill, poet and prophet, is spending his genius on the organising of the Zionist movement. Let us tell him that England, the British nation, which is still using in its liturgy the poetic utterances of his spiritual and natural ancestors, wants the religious genius of Judaism brought up to date and wrought into such speech as shall communicate to us the sacred fire of the prophets. England needs a Temple service which shall be as native to her, as expressive, as inspiring and disciplinary as was that of the ancient Jews, from which, in lieu of anything better and more recent, we still borrow, and by which we still live.

Not only has Mr Zangwill gone astray. Consider for a moment the pathetic waste of the bold imagination and virile tongue of Mr Rudyard Kipling. To what end has he written? To delight us and our children, and to back our imperialistic territory-grabbers. Or turn to Mr William Watson, prophet and poet of the higher patriotism. Not one in a thousand of his contemporaries has read a line of his. The nation should retain him. Why should not the Church, as in the great days when she summoned painters and architects, reserve now to her service those who possess the consummate gift of treasuring up in words to a life beyond life the precious life-blood of the nation's spirit? Then, together with Mr William Watson, the Church would call to herself Mr Edward Carpenter, democrat and brother to the worker—in order that labour might cease to be as Tennyson depicted it, "with a groan and not a voice"—that the Church at last might now again as at the beginning articulate the people's need and guide their forward-looking hope.

But we have not yet measured the full waste of the art of letters which should be devoted to-day to the rescue of religion. The two men of our time pre-eminently

suited, in taste, temperament, ability and enthusiasm, to become servants of the Church-that-is-to-be are Mr Chesterton and Mr Shaw. Yet their lives thus far have been worse than lost to this special work for which nature pre-ordained them. It is pathetic to hear Mr Chesterton again and again setting up a plea for ritual and yet know that his power to compose native liturgies for England, in the place of her borrowed Jewish and Romish forms, lies dormant and must by disuse become atrophied. Like all "sensitives," Mr Chesterton feels further than he can see. He feels rightly, intuitively, the nation's need of ritual; but, never having been summoned to provide a new one, he harks back to the Middle Ages. His book on *Heretics* would justify the Church in offering him an annuity of £1000 for the rest of his life and giving him a free hand to do his best towards providing a ritual English in spirit, English in form, English in origin and human in sympathy. His *Heretics* reveals a delicacy of ethical discrimination, a sanity of judgment and a penetration into the character of men and of the nation, which promise the Church a greater return for such an offer than she has received from any of her bishops through a thousand years.

And what shall we do with Mr Shaw? What but recognise him, the humanitarian, as sensitive as St Francis himself to the sufferings of the poor and of dumb brutes, as chivalrous as any knight of the Round Table, as candid as truth itself, and yet, more than all the other saints of the Church, possessing the supreme grace of humour, and that practical skill of stage-craft which is indispensable to the deviser of rituals? Why should this great gift of dramatic presentation not be utilised as the principles of moral pedagogy require, for the storming of the senses of the people in the interests of the soul of the nation?

Equally lamentable is England's loss, if we consider the genius of Sir Edward Elgar. To think that England's one really great and internationally renowned inventor of harmonies should have been setting to music that ghastly offspring of scholasticism born five hundred years out of due time, Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius!* Sir Edward Elgar should be retained by England to transform into convincing melody the dream of the women, the children, and the poor of England. He should be commissioned to cause the Vision of the Perfect City by the magic of music to hover over the horrors of our slums and by its loveliness constrain us to rebuild London after its likeness.

If even in our own immediate time there be such wealth of talent at command, what may we not hope from the succession of geniuses through a whole century? There is no dearth of ability; only of intelligent love for the nation as the standard-bearer of ideals and of organised effort to make the demand effective.

Luckily, those who can boast no touch of genius may organise this demand. We can expect nothing from the clergy themselves. Nor until the lawful authorities have sanctioned new forms, is it possible that such should be celebrated within the churches. The laity have no right, any more than the clergy, to supplement the authorised rites and ceremonials by others. It is possible, however, that Churchmen, in buildings not belonging to the Establishment, may hold religious meetings and adopt forms of worship as experiments and illustrations and as a means of educating the public. Only such experiments in actual celebration would make it possible for us to test the real merits of any new rite. Such action on the part of laymen could not be illegal nor disloyal. Only the self-interested or narrow defenders of antiquity would

protest. There is also ample precedent for such procedure on the part of lay Churchmen. Mr Dearmer, in the admirable preface to his *Parson's Handbook*, calls attention to the historic fact that until comparatively recent times the word "Nonconformist" designated not a Free Churchman who had left the Establishment, but a Churchman who nevertheless did not conform. Outside of the Church edifices, such a Churchman held services agreeable to his own convictions. For generations it was hoped that these Nonconformists would not break off from the State organisation. Now, after the lamentable calamity of schism and separation—the lesson having been learnt to the nation's shame and spiritual enfeeblement—there is good reason for hoping that the Nonconformists of the future, who in the interests of a humanistic faith will meet to celebrate rites consonant with that faith, will be triumphant within the Establishment itself. The result will then be not another schism but at last a unified and unifying spiritual organisation of the higher life of the nation. What is needed within the Church of England is an ethical-democratic party, which shall look to the interests of the new idealism. Indeed, such a party, under the name of Ethical Societies, has already sprung into existence and is making steady advance. The Ethical Societies in England cannot be fully understood, unless regarded not as a sect, not as Dissenters, not as Protestants, not as a new Church, but as a new Ecclesiastical Party within the national Church. Their object is to convert the nation itself into an ethical society. They aim to abolish Dissent and Protestantism altogether, by expanding, democratising and ethicising the historic State Church. They are taking up the point of view of the Humanists of the sixteenth century. They are continuing the work of Sir Thomas More and Erasmus,

who sided neither with Luther nor with the conservative party of Rome, but on the principle of Catholicism plus what was the Science of their day would have transformed the Roman organisation and rites. The Ethical Societies are the humanist party in the religious life of England in the twentieth century. The specific work of this party must consist in constructing Church services adequate to the science and the spiritual needs of present-day England, in experimenting in the actual conducting of such services in religious assemblings, and thus educating the public and winning converts to their party. When their experiments have so far developed and the party grown to such numbers, wealth and prestige, that they can claim attention as a factor in political life, they will introduce into Parliament bills for the abolition of supernaturalistic tests both for laity and clergy and bills permitting bishops at their discretion to introduce new supplementary services. Thus would be ushered in an era when all the different tendencies of faith would be equally recognised within the Established Church. Variations would not then imply nonconformity, much less schism. Side by side, rival forms could be practised and each group of worshippers could choose those commended of its own judgment. Out of unconscious or conscious comparison of various forms would arise ultimately a consensus of opinion as to which on the whole were best. These of themselves and without coercion would finally prevail. There would be no need to suppress any innocent forms which satisfied peculiarities and even eccentricities of temperament and intellect. Such would be the ideal method of religious evolution ; and such, there is reason to hope, will be the actual process, now that the nation for half a century has been disciplined to the idea of natural selection and the necessity of experiment, of

variety of experience and of deference to the spiritual individuality of others.

It is wholly inconsistent with the policy of the humanist party in England to wish to introduce a uniformity by compromise or a uniformity by terrorising either a minority or a majority. Humanism as a religious policy can adopt no other method than that which I have indicated—conscious effort, tentative adaptation, private enterprise, until the forms and materials have so developed and their beauty and meaning have so challenged the affection and admiration of the public, that there will be no need to clamour or wrangle or resort to the subterfuges of a cunning opportunism.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANGLICANISM PLUS IDEALISTIC HUMANISM

The re-interpretation and revision which I have been recommending consist in the discarding of every trace of trust in moral intelligences who are not members of human society and in a corresponding insertion of expressions of trust in combined human effort under natural law. Before applying this principle to the Book of Common Prayer, it would be well for anyone to bring fully before his mind what factors in the ordinary orthodox scheme of national ethical training must be rejected as coming under the head of intelligent agencies who are not members of human society. For this phrase may be so vague to many that they will not otherwise realise exactly its specific applications.

Let it then be observed that in setting aside supernatural agencies as a source of redemption we give up the possibility of any help from any human being after he has died, except such as he set into operation before his death. We close the spirit world as distinct from the human world and refuse direct assistance from human beings after they cease to be living members of society, except for the wisdom and character which they left behind them when they died. This general principle permits us the benefits of intimate communion, for instance, with Jesus

Christ so far as concerns the work he did and the character he revealed when on earth ; but it shuts us off from any trust in him as an agent still operating directly within human souls. This rejection of intercourse with human beings after their death in no wise involves a denial of their continued individualised existence. For of all the things which we may or may not say of death and immortality, this is undeniably a fact : that when a man dies, whether he live again or not, he does, by universal consent and law, cease to be any longer a constituent member of organised human society. After death he may still be living, but he cannot vote ; he is not allowed to amend the last will he made before dying ; he can inherit no property ; he cannot stand for election to any Parliament ; he cannot marry ; he cannot receive recognition as the father of any child. Whatever else death is or is not, it certainly is a removal of that individual moral agent from within the pale of the political and morally responsible fellowship of human society. So that in refusing to trust to the departed as agents in the scheme of ethical redemption, we are acting along the line of common sense as it has embodied itself universally in the laws and customs of all civilised peoples, and we are attempting to bring into the sphere of religious economy what is already the principle of all other departments of social utility. But the special application which I must here insist upon is that Jesus Christ shall be no exception to this principle.

It ought further, however, to be pointed out that social righteousness, with which the Christian religion primarily concerns itself, is, in its very origin and essence, identical with the tissue of the political, economic and physiological life of human society. And society must, to preserve its integrity, allow no powers to any human being after his

death, and can accept no benefits from him. It is in the name of righteousness, and not simply of the material interests of mankind, that the moral judgment of the world can give no place to the post-mortem activity of any spirit. When religion is brought into line with ethical realism it will surely give greater prominence than before to the earth-life of Jesus Christ and the wisdom and moral power which he left behind him. But for the very sake of that sublime heritage it will refuse to him any operation or any gratitude for any operation which he may be executing upon society since his death.

The expression "Christian spiritism," which I sometimes employ, may seem an unwarrantable combination of terms, but it is used to indicate the practice, which permeates all the historic churches, of direct communion with Jesus Christ as a personal agent still consciously loving mankind and working for its redemption. This practice is one of trust in an intelligence energising not as a member of human society and therefore superhuman and supernatural.

In the same way, reverence and gratitude to the Virgin Mary for what she was before she died, are entirely legitimate, but the moment she is regarded as a conscious being still interceding for us with her Son and attending to our human woes, the practice becomes spiritistic and therefore ethically illicit.

As of the Virgin Mary, so of all the other saints of the Church. There is a purely ethical and natural communion with them and adoration of them. But the moment they are treated as intelligent agents still operating in the manner in which they worked before their death, the communion cannot be morally tolerated. The good in society is a jealous God and will allow none other.

It may be permissible to point out here that the principle of discarding trust in supernatural agents, if applied to any of the other great religions of the world, would effect changes as drastic as in Christianity. For they are all, from an ethical point of view, worm-eaten with spiritism. Our canon, therefore, of revision is no petty and narrow rule animated by any specific antagonism to the Christian scheme of religion. It is a universal principle, based upon the ethical fact that righteousness is vitally dependent upon belief in redemption wholly from within the social organism of mankind.

The exclusion of any operation which Jesus Christ may have been performing since his death in no wise touches the question as to whether he was the Creator of the universe incarnate. If he were only a finite mortal like other men, and even if all other men can and do operate after their death, still the principle I am advocating requires the exclusion of any such operation from a religious scheme for the ethical redemption of mankind. We dare not give him place as an infinite spirit, but only as a man while he lived on earth, and as the bequeather of his earthly record. But if he were, even while living on earth, the personal Creator of the universe incarnate, still we can give, from an ethical point of view, no recognition to this aspect of his nature. All that was ethically valuable, and therefore religiously to be recognised, was his natural humanity. If such be the right attitude towards him even while living on earth, how much less can it be permissible to admit him in the aspect of infinite Creator as operating after his death!

There is at present in the Christian scheme of redemption a recognition of other finite invisible agents than the spirits of human beings who have died—angels and the devil. But there is no recognition of spirits inhabiting

natural objects or places and controlling outward events. Yet now that Christian nations have again come into reciprocal contact with the East, where demonism is rampant, it is well that this form of spiritism should be stigmatised along with the distinctively Christian species, in order that the Church, in the revision of her rites and ceremonies, may make provision against the inevitable spread among us of oriental demonism.

The current form of trust in invisible agents involves, besides the belief in Christ's conscious activity after his death, a form which in general has not been recognised as spiritism. For spiritism has always seemed to imply the belief in very many spirits, and Christian theologians have seemed to assume that if you cease to believe in spiritual pluralism, and recognise only one spirit, you have ceased to be a spiritist. But surely in the belief that there is an infinite, all-wise, omnipresent Creator, who exists and continues to operate, who every instant sustains by his will that which he first brought into being, we have spiritism *par excellence.* If the churches are to turn from trust in invisible agencies outside of society and to look for redemption only from within its own resources, they can no longer introduce the idea of a supernatural deity. God must henceforth be identical with the Spirit of Man within nature. The Creator of the universe, although he be a self-conscious personality, is not a member of human society. As in the case of every man after his death, so is it true of the Creator of the universe : there is no occasion whatever for denying his existence or doubting it, but the very moral sanity of society is at stake to insist that he is not a subject or object of rights or duties. A revising barrister would be legally and morally obliged to strike off his name, had it been entered, from any list of electors. Though he came

in bodily presence to the polls, his right to vote would need to be challenged. Otherwise political society were at an end. His will, in so far as it is beyond the general will of the community and the wills of individual men, can be given no place. There is no ethical ground for denying that all the uniformities and regularities of natural law are embodiments of his will. But these manifest themselves to the moral judgment of man not as purposes but as inevitable, inexorable conditions under which and within which our kingdom of ideal ends is to realise itself. Every rule of righteousness is a condition laid down in the sequence of nature for the attainment of the ideal ends of humanity. But these laws of nature can never be allowed recognition as holy for any other reason than for their absolute uniformity. In a scheme of moral redemption they must be treated not as themselves animated with a purpose, but as our opportunity for fulfilling the ends of social justice. The moment the personal Creator is approached for help, that moment there is a shirking of human responsibility and a denial of the immanent source of redemption.

Anyone will see that the common sense of mankind absolutely refuses to attribute any event in human experience to supernatural personal agencies, if he considers the universal practice of men where their ideas have not been constrained by priests of the supernatural. He will see that my contention is well founded, that to trace any moral event to a superhuman agent is socially and morally suicidal. Suppose you suddenly come across the dead body of a man who evidently has been killed by the bullet of a pistol. The pistol is lying near his body, and it is obvious that he has bled to death. Could it enter into the mind of any sane human being to entertain for an instant the thought that some super-

natural agent had fired the shot, and therefore committed the murder? It could not. Scarcely the extremest spiritist could so wander from the common sense and the universal and necessary presupposition of all society and of all evidence and tracing of deeds to human doers, as to think for a moment that the murder had been committed by an unembodied spirit. I say, then, that the presupposition underlying all belief in human responsibility is that no supernatural agent ever commits the deeds which we call crimes. And what I am pleading for is that this presupposition of all sanity, of all thinking upon moral conduct, should now at last enter into and control religious practices and teachings. It must now become the principle for the revision of all religious ceremonies. Spiritism must either be driven out from the realm of religious practice as it has been driven out from other spheres of human thought and conduct, or else it must be reinstated throughout the whole domain of experience. Such a reinstatement, however, is too grotesque and preposterous to be entertained even in jest.

Let us suppose that it is conceded to us that no incorporeal spirit could directly and unaided by a human being have murdered the man whose dead body we have imagined ourselves to discover, but that it is still maintained as a possibility that some human being was taken possession of and made the instrument of such an invisible agency. Is this presupposition any more tenable? If it be true that a human being may suddenly, against his will and possibly even without his knowledge, be transformed into the medium of some bodiless intelligent agency, is not the attribution of deeds to their human doers for ever afterwards at an end? How can we nail the deed to its doer if we allow even the millionth

part of an inch as a hole by which he may escape from the moral responsibility of being himself the perpetrator of the crime which his body performed? It is possible to maintain that a man suddenly becomes insane. But then there is no longer a question of assigning his deed to any personal agency. Indeed, the act itself ceases to be a deed and becomes morally a meaningless accident. But we cannot, consistently with the presuppositions of all practical reasoning, assign the motions of a man's body to any other agency than himself. The moment we do we are landed into an anarchy fatal to all society, because in direct contradiction to the fundamental presupposition upon which social life can alone be constructed. If to the doer does not belong the deed, where are we? If the doer be not the same intelligent agent to whom the past acts of his body are assigned, and in whose present consciousness the memory of his past deeds lives on as his own, how can we think?

This is, then, the presupposition of all moral judgment in harmony with which I would reconstruct the religions of the world: that no crime and no good deed that happens in this world shall ever be traced to any other moral agencies than those actually inhabiting living human bodies and recognised by other human beings as fit subjects of human rights and privileges. If this principle be true, then every attribution of any good impulse in our hearts or of any high resolution of our wills to the action, immediate or mediate, direct or indirect, with instrumentality or without, of Jesus Christ as a now operating agency beyond the civic community, is a mistake. Whatever can rightly be attributed to him must be traced to what he did and said and the influence he exercised while living as a member of human society. The effects of his words and deeds are incalculably

powerful to-day, and his example and his influence will probably grow. But those are indiscreet and not true disciples who are not ready to attribute all the wonders of his influence to him as he lived and acted during his short life on earth. Any benefits that may accrue from the doctrine that Christ as a moral agency now lives and acts, either with or without human instrumentality, are as nothing in comparison to the undermining of the fundamental presupposition of all social life and of all national idealism. The integrity of the spiritual organism of society requires, it presupposes, that all events which cannot be attributed to personal agencies within human society are to be attributed only to impersonal secondary causes in the ordered cosmos of cause and effect.

This idea must be embodied in the Book of Common Prayer. That book must be so transformed as to contain nothing which contradicts this fundamental principle of common sense and of moral responsibility. Whoever analyses the Book of Common Prayer, however, will find that thousands of its statements need not be interpreted spiritistically. They are perfectly consistent with a naturalistic view of the universe. We shall also find that there are strong probabilities for believing that, while the theory of those who originated or amended these forms and brought them into their present shape was spiritistic, their instinct, their intuition, their genius was thoroughly sane and therefore naturalistic. It will further be found that countless expressions are purely poetic, and would seem to involve a spiritistic philosophy only to persons whose theory had interfered with the natural and right use of their poetic imagination. These poetic passages, instead of being lost to us, receive a new beauty and meaning when the spiritism read into them has been wholly eradicated.

But before we pass to consider what changes this new idea will work in religious forms and principles, it may be well to notice how inadequate is ordinary language in furnishing us with a term to designate the principle which I have declared to be a presupposition of all moral judgments and an essential condition of all society. The commonest word in use is naturalism. This is the term which Sir John Seeley selects as the most fitting. Yet the term naturalism has become increasingly associated with a materialistic, atomistic theory of existence. Naturalism is generally supposed to mean that the ultimate reality of things consists of atoms of matter. Yet such a theory has absolutely nothing whatever of kinship with the principle which I have been advocating, and which is really the presupposition of all Sir John Seeley's thinking. That presupposition permits us to assign events to personal agencies as their origin provided the agencies are such as are recognised in political, legal, economic and domestic relations by the community at large. Such exclusive attribution of deeds to personal agencies who are members of human society does not involve an acceptance of the theory that the ultimate substance of things is a material atom. The presupposition I have been advocating requires that any events which cannot be attributed to an agent who is a member of human society must be assigned to secondary causes and be regarded as mere instances of the regular uniformities of nature. But this assigning of events to secondary causes in no wise commits us to materialism or atomism. Naturalism, therefore, as it is held by many physicists and as it is censured by the philosophical idealists—such as Professor James Ward, in his book on *Naturalism and Agnosticism*—is not at all the naturalism which Sir John Seeley respected and defended. It is not

at all the naturalism which is suggested as the opposite of supernaturalism.

Supernaturalism in the literature of religious controversy means nothing more nor less than the attribution of certain events in human experience to personal agencies who are not and cannot be recognised as living, responsible members of human society. Now it may be perfectly possible, for all that the opponents of supernaturalism care, that within nature there are millions of personal agencies unembodied, and therefore incapable of recognition as responsible members of political society. The refusal, therefore, to recognise these agencies ethically is not because they are outside of nature. It is because, whether inside or outside of nature, they are impossible of recognition. They have not the credentials for admission to human fellowship.

Naturalism, then, in religious controversy really means the rejection on moral and common-sense grounds of the recognition of any personal agent beyond the social organism. And supernaturalism means the recognition, at least occasionally, of some, at least a few, personal agencies beyond that organism. But how clumsy and awkward are both these words to convey such meanings! On this account, instead of using the word supernaturalism, I have occasionally presumed to use the term "spiritism."

But even the word "spiritism" is not self-illuminating. It is generally limited to the theories of those called modern spiritualists, and is not made to cover the spiritistic doctrines contained in ordinary Christian theology. I have therefore had to qualify the word, and speak of Christian spiritism. There is, however, a still deeper objection to the term. The word spirit ought by right to be applied as much to a personal agency living in a human body as to one unembodied. If one is spirit

the other is spirit. To designate by the word simply those agencies beyond the pale of political society, is to rob human agents of a useful epithet and to imply that somehow an agent in a human body is more akin to mere matter and blind force than an agent unembodied. Whereas it is easy to see that moral agency is none the less spiritual when the spirit has a body than when bodiless.

Perhaps I have said enough to prevent any critic from confusing the naturalism of the religion for which I plead with materialism of any kind, and may safely retain the word.

Indeed, despite the ordinary materialistic interpretation, it must be retained. There is no other word that indicates the inexorable uniformity of the sequences of physical and mental phenomena. One may, like John Stuart Mill, resolve all phenomena into sensations, and the whole reality of the physical universe into a system of permanent possibilities of sensation. One then abandons completely the materialistic dogma. But one retains the validity of the law of uniformity. This law constitutes nature. Nature is at least a system of permanent possibilities of sensation. Such an interpretation is wholly consistent with an idealistic philosophy, which declares that the physical universe has no existence except in so far as it is perceived. One may hold to the theory that to be perceived and to be are the same, and still one may be a naturalist. Indeed, all disciples of Immanuel Kant hold to the universal and necessary validity of the law of cause and effect. They believe in the integrity of nature, and yet they do not believe that nature has any existence except as it is perceived by the observing mind. The kind of teaching, therefore, which I have been here advocating may equally well be called idealistic

humanism or naturalistic humanism. But of the two it might better be called idealistic humanism. For then one is not in danger of seeming to be committed to the philosophic crudity that the universe exists independently of its being perceived.

If we take the word naturalism as designating the logical and moral exclusion of unembodied spirits as agents intellectually believed in and morally trusted to, it commits us in no wise to materialism, to the theory of atoms, or to the mechanical theory of the physical universe. Not to believe that there are any other spirits besides living human beings is by no means to doubt that living human beings themselves are spirits. Indeed, in proportion as one disbelieves in unembodied spirits one concentrates one's belief both intellectually and practically upon embodied spirits. When one rejects spiritism, one still has left both man and physical nature. But one by no means reduces man to a phenomenon or epi-phenomenon of physical nature. One may deal with man wholly from the point of view that his mind is real, and that it is a positive cause of events not only in itself but upon the human body and upon the physical universe. Ethical idealism, although it restricts itself absolutely to the hearts and wills of living human beings, deals essentially with the human will as a creative cause. It recognises the effect of the human mind upon the human body and upon outward nature. Such an ethical idealism is not supernaturalistic, and therefore may rightly be called naturalistic. But it is inconceivable that anyone could confuse it with atomism, materialism, or a merely mechanical view of cause and effect. The mind has its uniformities, but it is well-nigh an imbecility to attempt to interpret human purposes, affections and thoughts, human ideals and visions, and the distinctions between

selfish and unselfish, between noble and mean, between good and bad, into differences in the arrangements of the ultimate atoms of matter. Atomism, materialism and mechanism, although never for an instant to be denied in the domain of physics and chemistry, are an utter irrelevance in a scheme for the moral redemption of mankind. Morals treat of matters wholly disparate.

Let anyone read Professor Höffding's book on *The Philosophy of Religion*, and he will see very clearly presented a distinction now widely recognised between science as a presentation of the relations of cause and effect in events, and ethics and religion as a presentation of a scale of values or goods. He will find that Höffding recognises the validity of the law of cause and effect, of the principle of uniformity, among all sequences mental or physical, but maintains that the hierarchy of values is in no wise touched by the scientific arrangement of sequences. Even this scientific arrangement, however, does not involve the acceptance of matter or the atom as an ultimate and independent reality. Much less does the scale of values. Ethics begins with human purposes and human ideals, with the human will and the human heart, in the same way in which physics and chemistry begin with sensations of the senses. And ethics is no more shaken in the reality of the factors with which it starts by any scepticism or any dogma of materialism than are physics and chemistry by any speculative doubt as to the reality of time and space. There is not a word of materialism or atomism from the beginning to the end of the presuppositions which underlie the reasonings of this book.

Nor will anyone upon reflection look upon the principle which I have laid down as the fundamental presupposition of all ethical reasoning, as anti-theological or even non-theological. It may be so described only when the word

theology is made to apply exclusively to some special doctrine which attributes events to personal agencies beyond the pale of social life. Now, the word theology ought never to be so restricted. It must continue to mean the science or theory of God ; and a god must continue to mean any Power which has become an object of worship. According to this true definition of theology, the principles I have been advocating are theological. My theory, therefore, cannot be described as ethics without theology, or as non-theological or anti-theological morality. It is, on the contrary, a doctrine which must be classified as theological. So much, then, by way of clearing the fundamental idea which I think should be embodied in a revision of the Book of Common Prayer from possible misunderstandings and misrepresentations.

But while it is in place to give a succinct elucidation and defence of the ideas by which one intends to test the forms and teachings of the Book of Common Prayer, it is inconsistent with my purpose here to present these ideas in full. To do so would require a volume by itself. My purpose, then, is primarily to justify the ideas which I think should be embodied in the nation's manual of religious services. I presuppose that the ideas will appeal to thousands as being good, and will find intellectual response in the reason and experience of many. They are widely current, and are already regulative principles of conduct with many Englishmen. They are the inspiration and the consolation of those who in my judgment represent the truest spirit of our age and the most characteristic trend of our national life. This book, therefore, is in the first instance not written for those to whom its presuppositions will not appeal. It seeks the attention of those already converted to the ideas it starts with, and it hopes to convince such sympathisers of the

necessity of first preparing a revision of the Book of Common Prayer and then organising and agitating for the adoption of such a revised version by the lawful authorities of the Church of England.

While, however, the main and direct purpose of this book is not to furnish a proof of the truth and wisdom of its presuppositions, it is quite possible that indirectly and without conscious effort it will supply the best of all possible proofs or disproofs both of their truth and their wisdom.

One of the commonest methods to test the scientific value of a theory—let us say, like that of Natural Selection—is tentatively to assume that it is true and proceed with it as if it were true, using it as a working hypothesis. A theory is applied, to see what light it will throw upon knotty problems which have baffled solution. It is used as an organ of prevision. The student thinks out in concrete detail what he would have a right to expect, if the theory were true. Then he enters boldly along the trail suggested by the theory and sees what facts he comes upon. If, following a clue suggested by the theory, he discovers in fact what was deductively anticipated, he has killed two birds with one stone. He has found a new fact, but has also indirectly contributed towards the proof of the truth of the theory. It was fruitful ; it led in the right direction ; it could be trusted as a guide ; it therefore could not be wholly erroneous. Now in the realm of religious thought and life much confusion prevails. Controversy is bitter. No one seems to have proposed any principle which *a priori* reconciles science with religion, and both with the aspirations and ambitions of the working people of the nation. Even within the Church of England itself the one effective means of preventing faction and disruption and unseemly hatred is the incul-

cation of implicit obedience and loyalty to one's superiors. Suppose then we assume, without proving, that human beings ought to put no trust in personal agencies beyond the pale of political society; so much for our presupposition as a negative, excluding and destroying principle. Suppose we assume in the same way, without proving, that the whole of religious trust should be concentrated upon personal agencies within the spiritual organism of human society, upon the recognised members of political communities and upon the natural uniformities of the physical universe.

Here the same fundamental idea would furnish us with a clue as to what to discard from and what to admit into a manual for the religious services of the nation. All sorts of unexpected results may issue if we follow the lead of this principle, constructive and destructive. After we have come face to face with the concrete results, then we shall be in a position to judge whether or not the principle has been leading us aright or misleading us. Then we shall the better know whether to accept it and follow it further or to retreat and start again from another point of view.

I have said that the presupposition which constitutes the working hypothesis of this proposal for revision of the Prayer Book is one widely prevalent among the thinking and ruling classes of England. Among them also we find that already the task of applying it as a working hypothesis to the concrete problems of religious thought and life has been well begun. One of the chief pioneers in this undertaking was Matthew Arnold. In his *Literature and Dogma* and his *God and the Bible*, he, with boldness, with inexorable logic and with dazzling brilliancy of style, applies to the literature of the Old and New Testaments the principle which I here assume.

The result of his investigation is the discovery that the great writers throughout the Bible were purely and profoundly naturalistic in the sense in which the term is here used. He maintains that a man of disciplined mind and worthy scholarship, if unbiassed, cannot escape the conviction that all the Bible terms which are used to describe God refer to verifiable factors in universal human experience. He goes even further, and would sanction the continued use in a naturalistic sense of the Church's favourite formula for the Trinity. If he be right, then, the first result of our naturalism applied to the chief forms used in the Book of Common Prayer is that we need not and must not discard the language which the theologians have extracted from the Bible as expressive of the fundamental principles of Christian thought and life. If Arnold be right in his literary conclusions, our method of revision shall not consist in the discarding of all words which heretofore have been interpreted metaphysically and supernaturalistically. On the contrary, all that is needed is a new valuation of them from the point of view of idealistic humanism. I select as typical of Arnold the following passage from the chapter in *Literature and Dogma* entitled "Our Masses and the Bible" :—

"Suppose the Bible is discovered, when its expressions are rightly understood, to start with an assertion which *can* be verified : the assertion, namely, not of 'a Great Personal First Cause,' but of 'an enduring Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness.' Then by the light of this discovery we read and understand all the expressions that follow. Jesus comes forth from this enduring Power that makes for righteousness, is sent by this Power, is this Power's Son ; the Holy Spirit proceeds from this same Power, and so on.

"Now, from the innumerable minor difficulties which attend the story of the three supernatural men, this right construction, put on what the Bible says of Jesus, of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit, is free. But it is free from the major difficulty also; for it neither depends upon what is unverifiable, nor is it unverifiable itself. That Jesus *is* the Son of a Great Personal First Cause is itself unverifiable; and that there *is* a Great Personal First Cause is unverifiable too. But that there *is* an enduring Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness, is verifiable, as we have seen, by experience; and that Jesus *is* the offspring of this Power is verifiable from experience also. For God is the author of righteousness; now, Jesus is the Son of God because he gives the method and secret by which alone is righteousness possible. And that he *does* give this, we can verify again from experience. It *is* so! Try, and you will find it to be so! Try all the ways to righteousness you can think of, and you will find that no way brings you to it except the way of Jesus, but that this way does bring you to it! And, therefore, as we found we could say to the masses: 'Attempt to do without Israel's God that makes for righteousness, and you will find out your mistake!' so we find we can now proceed farther, and say: 'Attempt to reach righteousness by any way except that of Jesus, and you will find out your mistake!' This is a thing that *can* prove itself, if it is so; and it *will* prove itself, because it is so.

"Thus, we have the authority of both Old and New Testament placed on just the same solid basis as the authority of the injunction to take food and rest: namely, that experience proves we cannot do without them. And we have neglect of the Bible punished just as putting one's hand into the fire is punished: namely, by finding we are the worse for it. Only, to *attend* to this experience

about the Bible, needs more steadiness than to attend to the momentary impressions of hunger, fatigue, and pain ; therefore it is called *faith*, and counted a virtue. But the appeal is to experience in this case just as much as in the other ; only to experience of a far deeper and greater kind."

If even the epithets descriptive of the Trinity are applicable to factors in a religion of National Idealism, and are not only applicable but beautiful and inspiring, it is likely that all the language of the Bible may be appropriated. But even were it impossible to adopt certain passages without an unnatural forcing of the text and without a violation of the literary use of terms, that would make little difference. It would only show that those special passages, not being true to factors in human experience, were useless and to be discarded. The Book of Common Prayer, because it is wholly deduced from the Bible, naturally is susceptible to the same interpretation as the Bible. If the latter stands the test, and comes out justified from the point of view of humanism, so will the former.

It is true that the Book of Common Prayer is a very different book from the Bible. It differs not only in the fact that it is a manual for a ritual to be celebrated. It differs supremely from the Bible in the fact that it is arranged according to a philosophical and theological idea which dominated the Fathers of the Church and the leaders of the Reformation. The Book of Common Prayer is the Bible after the Bible has passed through the minds of Christian logicians and crystallised itself along the lines which to them seemed to give it the fundamental shape of eternal truth. The Bible writers were not abstract thinkers ; the compilers of the Book of Common Prayer, and those from whom they immediately derived

its materials and forms, were pre-eminently metaphysicians, intellectualists, dogmatists. But the question is whether their metaphysics, like the intuitive poetry of the Bible, reflected or distorted the factors and the relations of the factors in universal moral experience. The Book of Common Prayer in its ordering of the festivals of the Christian year, in its arrangements for readings from the Old and New Testaments, and in every way, thrusts into the forefront of the worshippers' attention what it conceives to be the only true and saving doctrine. The question, then, becomes whether the exact correlative in a naturalistic scheme of redemption, as it should be embodied in a nation's ritual, would not receive the same relative eminence. My own conviction is that it would. It would seem that, after all, the metaphysicians too are among the poets, and that their doctrine, while it may be bad as scientific theory, is altogether admirable as a product of conscience and constructive imagination.

When miracle is wholly discarded and God is taken to be simply the moral ideal and the tendencies which make for its actualisation in human society on earth, the nation's ritual of religion must give the ethical factor in life the same pre-eminence as was given of old to God. If from the point of view of naturalistic humanism the character of Christ is as beautiful and helpful and instructive, compared with the characters of other men, as the supernaturalists suppose, then his pre-eminence will continue; and the more it is appreciated, the more the conviction will spread that, whatever supernaturalists said to the contrary, the real cause of their loyalty to Jesus was his character, his moral insight, and the spiritual charm of his personality.

It is quite true that in a religion of National Idealism many of the terms which were inflexible, rigid, and absolute on the lips of the supernaturalist now become

only relative and assume the fluidity and plasticity common to words as understood in secular literature. As Arnold says, the language of the New Testament is not that of science ; and the person who uses its phrases as if they were as rigid as the technical notations of science simply rules himself out of court as one incapable of judging.

When once the Bible has been accepted as a part of humanistic literature in general, it follows inevitably that the characters and ideals it presents do not differ in kind from those of other national scriptures. If its characters remain pre-eminent, it will only be in degree, and their distinction will be only one of relative merit.

It follows also that as a guide to life and thought certain parts of it will be regarded as obsolete. Despite Matthew Arnold's insistence upon the ethical meaning of the fundamental message of the Old and New Testaments, he does not for a moment deny that interblended with that message is a belief in miracles and in superhuman agencies. Never again can all parts of the Bible be held in equal esteem. Likewise the Bible can never again be assigned a monopoly of the religious reverence of a nation, as if it alone were sacred and other national scriptures were profane. It therefore follows that from henceforth the reviser of a nation's manual of religious rites and ceremonies will find himself disposed to appropriate, from the literature, ancient or modern, of every nation, whatever on its own merits and because of its moral effects commends itself.

No one can have searched for this purpose the writings of modern times and not have been appalled at the blindness caused by the jealous reverence in which the Book of Common Prayer in its present form is cherished. Both from the point of view of literature and of ethical religion

one finds hundreds of passages in the English poets and prose writers which wholly eclipse many of the Psalms and many of the Lessons for the Day and many passages from the Gospels and Epistles selected and arranged throughout the Christian year.

Notwithstanding these qualifications and limitations it may, however, be contended, not only that the Bible literature but that the order of the Book of Common Prayer on the whole should remain intact. Much which heretofore has been understood almost exclusively in a supernaturalistic sense will be interpreted naturalistically, irrespective of whether the original writers consciously so meant it or not. Much also which to them was literal account of miracles will be accepted simply as poetry. As such it will not possess less but more charm on account of the naïve and quaint credulity of the writers. For what we are beginning to realise is that a man may be absolutely unscientific and uncritical in his narrative of events, and he may count the miracles he believes in essential to religious faith, and, nevertheless, through it all one may receive an almost overwhelming sense that the narrator is thoroughly and supremely animated by ethic passion. It may also be possible that, despite his so-called superstitions, his moral insight is such as to command the homage of our hearts and the reverence of our intellects. It is on these grounds that even the arrangement of the Christian year devised through the ages by the leaders of the Church possesses great ethical merit and charm.

Consider the scheme of moral salvation which is worked out to a finish in the services as appointed for the year's use. It is undeniably based, in the conscious scheme of those who devised it, upon the idea that miracles are the chief witness to Christ's divinity and that

his divinity is one with his supernatural power. The Christian year begins with Advent, and all those parts of the Gospel stories which the higher critics now consider latest and least authentic are the very ones which the Church seizes upon with avidity to bolster up the claims of Christ to absolute homage—the warnings in dreams to Joseph and Mary, the star in the East, the flight into Egypt, and the massacre of the innocents. Then into the forefront of the services from week to week are set forward from Christmas to Easter, not the sayings, not the wisdom, not the humanness and naturalness of Jesus, but all the most improbable wonders, not even excluding John's stories of the raising of Lazarus and the like. Nothing could be more dramatic with tragic horror than the way the agonies of the Crucifixion are forced to the front and made to fill up the whole imagination of the worshipper. It is all done on the erroneous principle that the death of Christ, in and of itself, on account of its miraculous effects, is more significant in the scheme of redemption than what he taught and what he manifested of human goodness in the radiant beauty of his moral personality. The makers of the manual did not regard the death, as they should have done, as chiefly valuable because such utter self-sacrifice was the proof and witness of his sincerity and love. On these grounds alone would it have been right to bring to the forefront the account of his death. It is evident, however, that their motive arises in the conviction that his death, besides being an index to his character, was in itself more significant than his life, and wrought occult effects in the bosom of an infinite and superhuman agency.

Easter, the celebration of the miraculous resurrection of Christ from the dead, is made the great high feast of the Christian year. Only after it has been reached are

time and space found for his ethical teaching and those simple, homely deeds which manifested the plain humanity of the man.

Such being the fact, how, it may be asked, can an advocate of naturalistic humanism maintain that the order of the services of the Book of Common Prayer is ethically commendable? The answer is not far to seek. The Resurrection has an ethical and natural as well as a magical and supernatural significance. Even those who believed in the magic and the supernatural were themselves, however unconsciously, animated, attracted, and held spellbound by the ethical and natural elements of fact contained in the myth as to the literal and physical resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Exactly as Matthew Arnold maintains that the word God refers to the Power that makes for righteousness, that the Sonship of Christ means that Jesus was a product of the Power in righteousness that makes for national welfare, and that the Holy Ghost is the common or general will of a social group each of whose members, being good, possesses the power inherent in righteousness; so the resurrection of Christ was not only the survival but the augmenting of the power of righteousness which he had communicated to his disciples. He was dead and gone; but the principles, the ideals, the aims, the enthusiasms, which he had communicated, instead of subsiding and dying away, increased in ascendency after his death and because he had died. This perfectly natural and human effect of his death upon the spirit of his disciples is an ethical and verifiable fact hidden in the doctrine of the resurrection. It is a truth whose significance is enhanced instead of diminished by the discarding of all miracle and of supernaturalism. Of all the festivals, therefore, of the Christian year, Easter is the most ethical and naturalistic.

This is so notwithstanding the fact that it has always been also the most magical and supernaturalistic. Easter is the great festival of human hope, of human progress, of upward evolution, of growth and triumphant development. It is the great Spring festival. It had been a heathen nature-feast. Christianity, catching up the symbolism of nature and preserving the significance of the season of fresh life, transformed it and lifted it to the higher plane of moral principles and events.

There is no reason in the world to try to prove that Christ did or did not expect to live and act and continue his work after his death. Nor is there any reason to prove or disprove that he did actually rise miraculously. The whole question is from the point of view of idealistic humanism insignificant. Ethical religion, in its devotion to its own task and in its jealous assertion of the supremacy of its own end and the dignity and adequacy of human and natural means, will grow impatient equally of those who think it worth while to prove and of those who think it worth while to disprove by arguments the literal resurrection of Christ. If he did rise, it can have no practical or human significance for us. If he did not rise, that could in no wise damage or tarnish the splendour of what did happen. His work, his teachings, the influence of his example, the life communicated by his personality, survived his death and rose above it fresher and more resplendent, mightier and more persistent than before.

It well may be that a place may some day be found in the Book of Common Prayer for Plato's account of the death of Socrates, which also was followed by resurrection. The intellectual mission of Socrates was not checked by his death. On the contrary, it developed in the mind of Plato and then of Aristotle, and lives to-day immortal

in the spirit and method of free investigation. But how can anyone, when these two deaths and two resurrections are placed side by side, fail to value both ; and yet, valuing both, how can anyone fail to see the incomparable and surpassing significance of the death and resurrection of Christ ? That resurrection means nothing but the survival and development of his life's work. As such it is beyond all historic doubt. It well may be that every incident of his life as told in the Gospels is mythical ; but the myths point to some reality. It may be that no one man possessed those qualities of mind and heart, and did those deeds of neighbour love, and said those words which gave birth to the myth. But that somebody—or a hundred persons—so lived and so died as to suggest the myth, who can deny ? Nor can anyone doubt that the work they started still goes on in increasing abundance of power.

The possibility of revising the Book of Common Prayer so that it should become an instrument of idealistic humanism, depends, of course, upon whether Bible literature and Christian doctrine do or do not consist essentially, however unconsciously, of the ethical factors which Arnold and others have attributed to them. If Arnold's interpretation be right, it is impossible to believe that the historic terminology and the historic associations of religion could be omitted from any scheme for the ethical redemption of mankind. For, other things being equal, the gain of not breaking the continuity of the organised life and traditions of religion is enormous. The severing of one's connection with the past may be necessary and inevitable, but it never could be an unmixed advantage.

If, however, the judgment of idealistic humanists should ultimately be against the judgment of Arnold and Seeley and of Mr John Morley, still connection with the so-

called secular literature and the so-called secular history of society could not be broken. Yet it will be found that defects of historic evidence, differences of judgment and interpretation of the past, introduce almost as many difficulties in the appropriation of non-religious and unecclesiastical materials of literature and history as we encounter when we attempt to re-interpret the Bible and revise the Prayer Book.

It must be remembered that so-called secular literature is just as much in its fundamental preconceptions permeated with supernaturalism as are the teachings and forms of the Church. There is not a single great poet in English literature, unless it be Shakespeare, who is naturalistic and humanistic in point of view. Think of Browning and Tennyson! Not even Shelley and Byron restrain their imagination and faith within the realm of naturalism. Poets and prose writers who have no ethical enthusiasm or insight are just as apt to be spiritistic and even craven in their fear of superhuman agencies as were the ethical prophets of old and the Fathers of the Church. Indeed, non-ethical writers on the whole verge more towards supernaturalism than the ethical. They believe in dreams and warnings, in signs and formulæ. They incline to the occult. There is a certain sensuous bliss and irresponsibility in the practices and promises of an unethical supernaturalism which commends itself to the vain and venturous. But even if naturalistic, of what use could the works of non-ethical poets be in a national manual of ethical religion? Such being the saturation of literature and tradition with supernaturalism, it would seem that, if the Bible and the Prayer Book are to be wholly set aside, nothing of the world's literary and artistic treasure can be retained.

## CHAPTER VII

### ANGLICANISM PLUS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Nobody seems to deny the failure of both the Church and Dissent to attract the masses of England. Their aloofness also is commonly regarded, and rightly, as a greater calamity to the nation than the split between the Establishment and Nonconformity. It constitutes a division of the nation into those who have some sort of a religion and those who have no religion—at least, none articulate and organised.

All England is divided into three classes. Those who have only their labour and their hope to live by constitute one class. Those who own capital and control the labour of others a second. And those who possess land as well as capital and the labour of others a third. The interests of these distinct sections of the community, their tastes and their culture are different and conflicting.

But while England is thus divided into three classes, there are only two churches. Those who have only their labour and their hope to live by—and not always these—are without a church. There is no organisation, there are no recognised preachers of religion, to awaken the higher self-consciousness of the working people. The Established Church ministers to the sentiments and tastes of the landowners, the titled aristocracy and their retinue. The

Free Churches stimulate the hope and give elasticity to the step of the middle classes.

The inability of the churches to attract the working people has seemed of late deeply to alarm and to set musing the leaders of both church and chapel. "Here is this great outlying prize, like a mountain of spiritual gold-ore," say they, pointing to the proletariate; "what wealth of distinction and power awaits the religious body which actually succeeds in doing what General Booth has so pitiably failed to accomplish!" Although it is quite natural that they should be alarmed at their failure to bring the Gospel to the poor, their inability to detect what peculiarity in themselves and their equipment is the cause of their impotence is well-nigh ludicrous. Self-blindness was the one moral weakness which tempted the humane Shakespeare to make any character the butt of laughter. Would he have let escape these self-blind would-be guides of the people? The leaders of the churches are perhaps right in being unable to trace their failure to any obliquity in their own hearts. They want to do good to the working people. They want not only to save souls, but to rescue the mundane life of the people from poverty. The preachers know their own hearts, and know them to be pure. But they apparently have not thought of examining their brains, to see whether it be not some defect of native intelligence or mental equipment that is the cause of the churches' shame.

One must not forget that the whole tradition of the churches for centuries has taught them to care very much for purity of heart and almost not at all for intellectual virility. Undoubtedly this tradition has not only led them on a false scent in seeking out the causes of failure, but has also occasioned a certain intellectual

atrophy through disuse. How otherwise can we explain the fact that as the result of the expert advice and elaborate censuses and statistical tabulations of attendance at church which in recent years have been furnished, only two causes were commonly assigned by religious leaders for the apathy of the masses? One explanation seemed the more favoured by Anglicans, the other by Dissenters. Both, however, referred not to any deficiency in the preacher or in the gospel preached but to the buildings. The Anglicans, after due deliberation and digestion of statistics, came to the conclusion that Gothic architecture is not congenial to the taste of working men. You cannot get the working people to enter Gothic structures. The policy based upon this explanation was logical and direct enough. "If our buildings offend, we cannot build new ones; but there is the whole open air outside. Let us preach out of doors; let us even attach pulpits to the outside of the walls of our churches." And, in fact, several such have recently been affixed to church walls in London. The Dissenters have found equal difficulty in inducing working men to come inside of their buildings. The building must be at fault! "But it cannot be its architecture, as it has none. It simply means that the working people like to stay out of doors." Here are the difference and the likeness of official Nonconformity and Anglicanism. They now understand the working people, who like to be out in the cold, the wind, the fog, and the rain. At last the Gospel will be preached to the people. Mohammed will go to the mountain! Yet how strange it is that the churches are empty because the people prefer to stay out in the cold, while the taverns are thronged from morning till midnight that the British workman may escape the chill and bleakness of the out-door air!

When the spirit of social democracy enters the heart of the preacher it will also open his eyes, and before his vision will dawn the truth that not where but what he has been preaching has been at fault. If any preacher doubts my word, let him test it by pouring forth Sunday after Sunday for a half-year the substance and spirit of the most famous sermon in the whole history of English religious eloquence. It was preached by John Ball. As the part preserved to us in the popular histories of England is but an expansion of Christ's beatitude ending "For they shall inherit the earth," and is at the same time an epitome of the gospel of social democracy, let me quote the very words, that there may be no doubt in my reader's mind as to what are the sure prophecy and the real passion of social democracy, and of Anglicanism when transfused with these. There is a ring in John Ball's words so real and so rare that no preacher uttering them to-day would finish half-a-dozen sentences of them before every sleeping ear in the congregation would prick up to listen. "Good people, things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all come of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the

wind in the fields. While it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." But John Ball was divinely mad; and the priests of our day are inhumanly sane!

Except those who have been touched by John Ball's divine madness. There are increasing numbers of such priests in the Anglican order to-day. I might cite from them thousands of sentences with the same ring of reality as John Ball's own. This seems to prove that, although as real as ever, that ring is becoming less rare. There is to-day an increasing fusion of Anglicanism with social democracy. I shall cite only one clerical utterance in proof. Although I take it from the last book by an Anglican clergyman which I have read, it is typical of the new fervour. In his Introduction to *The Parson's Handbook*, which I have already cited, Mr Percy Dearmer is speaking of the vulgarity of present-day art in the churches. He instances this defect as one cause why at least one class of English society—those who are æsthetically sensitive and cultivated—stay away from church. He regards them as a section of the whole of the intellectual caste, which at our church services is conspicuous for its absence. He explains the decline in art after this fashion: "The clergy have worked on purely commercial lines; they are mostly even now content with decoration that is the ridicule of competent artists, or is ignored by them as not being even amusing; and the Church has almost entirely failed to call to her service the great artists and craftsmen of which the last generation produced so large a number. Her place as patroness of art has been taken by the merchants of Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool." After further delightfully animated and incisive thrusts in this same direction, he turns and aims again, if I mistake not, with the same

accuracy of eye in saying, "And there is another class of persons concerned, the largest of all, the working class. For vulgarity in the long run always means cheapness, and cheapness means the tyranny of the sweater. A modern preacher often stands in a sweated pulpit, wearing a sweated surplice over a cassock that was not produced under fair conditions, and, holding a sweated book in one hand, with the other he points to the machine-made cross at the jerry-built altar, and appeals to the sacred principles of mutual sacrifice and love." Hark to the words of John Ball risen again from the dead! How scorching the flame of social democracy fused with the cleric's love-hot shame at this new dishonour of the bride of Christ!

In Chapter III. I have pointed out that the preaching of our day is ahead of the teaching embodied in the forms and ceremonies. I there had in mind not the relation of the preaching to social democracy, but to the methods, the spirit and the results of scientific thinking and critical philosophy in their bearing upon supernaturalism. The same must be said of the relative fitness of preaching and liturgy from the point of view of social democracy. The preaching is deplorable enough, but the ritual is positively abject. Accordingly, it is not enough to change the sermons. The message of John Ball must become the indwelling and quickening principle of the whole liturgy of the Anglican Church. The Litany must be re-interpreted and where necessary re-written from the point of view that salvation is to come only by the intelligent effort and co-operation of the people. All the hymns and anthems and prayers of the Church must either be totally re-written or absolutely re-interpreted so as to mean practically the very opposite of what in the past has been supposed to be their implication. Old forms must be re-

thought, or else totally new forms must be elaborated, on the principle embodied in that rugged but immortal rhyme of John Ball's—

> Let might help right
> And skill go before will,
> And right before might ;
> So goeth our mill aright.

Or rather I should say it will be necessary both that the old forms shall be radically re-thought and also that new forms shall be originally created to supplement the old. Such new forms will have the effect of causing the old ones to be re-interpreted and understood in a sense not only opposite in logic but diametrically antagonistic in psychological effect. In a book shortly to be published, I shall illustrate specifically how it is possible to understand a very large part of the Book of Common Prayer in a naturalistic and social-democratic sense. But I should like to offer an illustration and give here an example of the supplementary new forms which the nation needs. If John Ball and Mr Percy Dearmer express sentiments of the kind which are soon to sound generally from the pulpits of the land, Mr Edwin Markham—to cite only one among many poets of our day—has been composing anthems which the Church will incorporate in the Prayer Book when she becomes touched by the spirit of social democracy. Already in those earnests of the Church-that-is-to-be, Labour Churches and Ethical Societies, Edwin Markham's " Man with the Hoe " is one of the favourite parts of the Ethical-Labour Litany. I myself have read it a hundred times on as many Sundays before fifty different religious societies. I have never known any passage from Psalmist, Prophet or Apostle to awaken religious awe and terror, pity, love and the sense of personal responsibility, like this. I have only

regretted that some great tone-composer has not transmuted its passion into music. But that will come. "The Man with the Hoe" will be one of the anthems of the Anglican Church, to be sung on the great high festivals of Man. Long ages after the whole world has been lifted above poverty it will still be sung at these high festivals, to prevent the world from falling again into the inhuman system of private wealth which spread and perpetuated starvation of soul and body. As my reader may not have at hand this poem of Edwin Markham's, and yet without having vividly in mind its sentiments and its form cannot judge whether my estimate of it be exaggerated or temperate, I reprint it here. If my reader turns to his Prayer Book, or knows by heart the anthems, canticles and Psalter, he may judge for himself whether "The Man with the Hoe" is not comparable in dignity and redemptive power with the greatest hymns of the Church—with, let us say, the Magnificat :—

Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages on his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the unknown deep?

Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labour, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the judges of the world,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward-looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb terror shall reply to God,
After the silence of the centuries?

Would not the incorporation of this poem into the Book of Common Prayer hasten the fulfilment of that prophecy in the Magnificat, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the

mighty from their seat : and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things : and the rich he hath sent empty away" ?

There have been writers who have protested against the identification of the sentiments of John Ball and Mr Edwin Markham with the word democracy. They attempt to dampen the ardour of democrats by pointing out that democracy is after all nothing but a form of government. And how, they imply, can anyone grow enthusiastic and poetic over such a thing as a mere form of government ? Thus they seem to disparage all government as being a matter only of machinery and routine, a matter for cold-blooded politicians. This was the attitude taken by Sir Henry Maine in his book on *Popular Government*, where he devotes a whole chapter to eradicating, if possible, enthusiasm from the breasts of democrats. How can any sane man, he thinks, wax enthusiastic over a mere form of government ? He therefore concludes that those who do so must be ignorant of what they are talking about and need to be enlightened. For instance, in regard to Mr Edward Carpenter's little volume entitled *Towards Democracy*, he concedes that it does not lack poetic force and fire. But, he adds, "the smallest conception of what democracy really is, makes his rhapsodies about it astonishing." "If the author," he continues, "had ever heard of the dictum of John Austin or M. Scherer that 'Democracy is a form of government,' his poetic vein might have been drowned, but his mind would have been invigorated by the helpful douche of cold water." But Sir Henry Maine wholly misconceives the situation. He can cite no single word or line to prove that Mr Edward Carpenter was not perfectly aware that democracy is a form of government. Indeed, this is the very thought which created in Mr

Carpenter's prophetic mind the ruddy glow of enthusiasm. And how could it be otherwise in a humanitarian possessed of creative imagination? How, further, in sober logic, I ask, can it diminish the significance of democracy one whit to say that it is only a form of government? For suppose the effects of that form upon mankind at large, upon human happiness, upon liberty, upon the opportunity to live a truly human life, are stupendously beneficent—is that not a reason for waxing eloquent if one has the gift of eloquence and has the soul to see and be inspired by the vision? I would ask anyone to read verse after verse of the democratic poems of Whitman, Lowell, Swinburne, Carpenter and Markham, while at the same time repeating mentally that the thing these poets think so inspiring is a form of government. Then they will see that the meaning and dignity of the democratic chants, instead of being diminished, are enhanced by keeping vividly in mind exactly what the poets are talking about. Indeed, the wonder of it all is the greater that a mere mechanical device, a trick of government, a bit of the machinery of politics, should be fraught with well-nigh infinite weal or woe to mankind. There is nothing which creates admiration, awe and wonder more effectually than that from a tiny cause shall come a well-nigh infinite effect. Such is a part of the wonder of democracy.

The truth is that Sir Henry Maine was overlooking the possible effect of a form of government upon those human energies which combine to create it and those other human energies which through it are liberated and made effective. He abstracted it from the appetites and passions, habits and fears, ideals and systems of philosophy, which beget it and which it in turn begets. He regarded it simply from the point of view of social statics. He

thought of it as a device of politics out of relation to its human causes and human effects. But so to do was to be surpassingly dull if not downright stupid. For the real meaning even of machinery, even of a trick of politics, can never be seen or appreciated until the machinery is understood in relation to the purposes and imagination which conceived it and to the ends which it serves. Poets have praised wine on account not of its chemical composition but of its effects upon the mind and body of those who drink it. They praise sunlight, not for its atomic or ethereal or any other composition, nor for its nature as vibrations—although these also, if one were truly a poet, are sublime enough. But they praise sunlight because of its glory to the human eye and its beneficence to all living creatures. If one must disparage democracy because it is merely a form of government, one must likewise maintain that there is nothing glorious in a prism of glass because it is only a bit of glass made into a special shape. Yet into that prism the light from the sun pours white and rushes forth drenched in every hue of the rainbow. There are some of us whose hearts leap up when we behold the prismatic splendours ; and the delight that we have in them we transfer to the marvellously potent mechanism which produces them. It is folly to abstract the prism from the ether waves which it refracts. The prism is a prism by virtue of the effects it produces. Its meaning and its value would not exist otherwise. The truth is, a mere statical study of popular government like Sir Henry Maine's is superficiality itself. A student must move on to consider the dynamics of the institutions he is examining. Then he will be rewarded with real insight into causes and effects. And if he be capable of awe, admiration, disinterested terror and human sympathy, he will find himself thrilled

by the mighty meanings of that which at first was merely a form of government. For in the end he will discover that democracy is also a gateway, opening into the City of the Light. Or, if he have no love for nor faith in the people, still he will not be apathetic towards that political device of popular government. It will inspire him with as much terror and alarm as it awakens of hope and admiration in the poets of democracy. He will discern sufficient grounds either for the passionate dread of Edmund Burke when he sounded the alarm against the French Revolution, or for the ecstatic hope of Swinburne, Lowell, Whittier, Whitman, Markham and Carpenter.

That which stimulates historians and statesmen and philosophers to outbursts either of terror or admiration when they regard democracy, is the unprecedented magnitude of the capacities of a sovereign people, for good or for evil. We see that what a people, fully awake, intelligent, educated and trained, may do as sovereign is beyond all imagination greater than what any king or nobility or middle class could achieve while the masses of the people lay dull, apathetic and passive. Whether a whole nation, awake politically, will act beneficently or work havoc, nobody with any intelligence can have a shadow of doubt that whichever it does it can do on a gigantic scale. Nero were harmlessness itself and innocence compared to what a whole nation of men and women would be, if enthroned and made one by a form of government, were they but for one day to become mad with vanity and lust, or drunk with power or bloodthirsty with revenge. Something like this Edmund Burke saw or foresaw in France and feared for England. On the other hand, imagine a whole nation, each one of whose members was inspired—as Japan apparently means to inspire every Japanese—with an ideal of national per-

fection and efficiency; imagine each citizen, man or woman, contributing genius, skill, self-control and provident pity co-operatively to the nation as a whole through a form of government happily devised to this end. Think of twenty million wills all working together to one goal, twenty million intellects reflecting upon one problem, twenty million hearts beating in disinterested kindliness!

When anyone says that democracy is only a form of government he seems to imply that it does not bring into existence anything new, anything different from what all earlier forms of government have done. But a people as sovereign is new and different. It is infinitely mightier for better or worse than a single man or a special class in power. To attempt therefore to make government by the people appear a trifling matter is to indulge in a dangerous falsehood. The moment government becomes democratic a new spirit mounts the throne, terrific in strength and as yet inexperienced. But for sheer power it is more like a god than like a mortal or like any unorganised throng of mortals. It is easy then to understand Edmund Burke's alarm when he witnessed the birth of democracy in France and noted the signs of democratic travail in England; but it is hard to believe in the intelligence or honesty of anyone who, in order to cool democratic fervour in others, would belittle its significance. Because democracy is a new form, it is a new force in government.

Sir Henry Maine's analysis of democracy is superficial for the reason which I have already indicated—that he approached the subject only from the point of view of social statics. The dynamic point of view alone opens up to us the essential secret of popular government. It is the only approach that leads us to the inside of any social institution.

The study of social dynamics is an investigation in human motives and outward stimuli to those motives. The forces that make and unmake institutions are men's hopes, ambitions, appetites, fears, fancies, doctrines, and faiths. It is true that these psychic forces themselves are reacted upon and modified by different institutions. But because institutions, economic and political, do react upon men's hearts and minds and wills, they are never merely mechanical. They are never mere machinery. They are so many irritants to thinking, feeling and willing. They must be viewed as psychic factors in the moral universe of man and not as material and outside facts. In studying the relation of popular government to organised religion—of social democracy to church discipline—it is especially worthy of note that this dynamic point of view —the study of motives as the causes of institutions and the study of institutions as stimuli to impulses—is the one which each person always assumes when observing and estimating himself. He sees and feels himself to be a creative agent. If he be a creature as well as a creator, he is conscious of himself as not having been fully created as yet. He is waiting a chance to be created and is conscious within himself of creative power. He may be fully aware that his character at any given moment is a balance of impulses in equilibrium. But to him that balance is not a finality. He even from within may disturb it. He is, moreover, never interested in himself as an accomplished fact. He is a potentiality. He is capable of responding to forces that have not yet had a chance to operate upon him. He is "moving about in worlds not realised"; and when he judges himself he includes in his selfhood what he aspires to be equally with what he has been. He takes to himself credit for what he might have done but by accident was prevented from achieving.

For he knows his own secrets, and while others may mistake his actual record for a revelation of himself, he counts it rather as a concealment of what he really is. He knows well enough what other circumstances might have brought to light and life. It is as if gunpowder were conscious beforehand of what the accidental discoverer found out only after a spark had touched it. Now this dynamic, this inward point of view in investigation and criticism, is the only scientific one when the subject of consideration is oneself, another man, a nation or any institution within a nation, even a form of government. It must be remembered that such dynamic study of social phenomena not only gives the one scientific perspective of facts; it also furnishes the only just standard for judging of the moral worth and the political significance both of individuals and of institutions. Now, am I wrong in thinking that this exercise of sympathetic imagination, which sees every human being as a creative energy, which views everyone from the inside and recognises him as a creature sensitive to stimuli from without, is the motive of the Christian religion and is the point of view of Christian theology, and always has been so? And if, from this dynamic point of view, democracy is the only form of government which unlocks the hidden and secret springs of spiritual energy within every individual breast, is there not tragic irony in the fate of the churches, which to this hour more than any other human institution have withstood the spirit of democracy?

The Church of England must become social democratic, or it will deserve to be "cast as rubbish to the void when God hath made the pile complete." For the Established Church is established on the presupposition that it is the national church, and the whole end and essence of the

national church as an organisation is that it shall convert the nation itself into a spiritual organism. And a spiritual organism is one in which every moral agency is at the same time both means and end to all the others, no one being in any particular used merely as a tool by others or by the whole, and no one permitted to become an end unless serving in turn. Such a nation, so organised and so become spiritually organic, would be a perfect society, a heavenly city, a kingdom of heaven—a kingdom of heaven on earth. Such—is it not?—is at least the professed end of the Church. In so far as she forgets that end she ceases to be the Church and becomes veritably the Antichrist.

Before presenting social democracy as a religion in closer detail, let me point out two characteristics of Anglicanism which bring it much nearer than Nonconformity to the social democratic movement of our time. The first is its belief in the union of Church and State. This is nothing more nor less than socialism in the sphere of religion. The doctrine, on the other hand, of the separation of Church and State is nothing short of the rankest individualism. I am perfectly well aware that many socialists, possibly the majority, both in France and England, believe in the separation of Church and State. But then, do they know anything about the real function of the Church? Have they any fundamental conception or philosophy of religion? Do they believe in religion at all? Are they aware that socialism, until it becomes transfigured into a religion, will never become a light radiant enough to illumine the world? Are they further aware that until religion is organised it can never have the power to perform its true sociological function? It must never be forgotten, further, when the authority of present-day socialists is cited, that socialism itself is

still so permeated with its very opposite—philosophic Anarchy—that it is not yet half itself. Before one pays full respect to the authority of a socialist's word, one must hark again to detect whether it is the socialist or the anarchist in him that is speaking. Socialism, furthermore, has hitherto so exclusively concentrated its attention upon economic and material wealth that it has fallen into the error of imagining that material wealth is the whole domain for the application of the principle of nationalisation under the State. This again but proves that many socialists are half anarchists. They relegate to anarchy one whole half of human life, and that the better half, the higher life. A thorough and philosophic socialism believes in the nationalisation not only of man's labour but of man's love. It consistently and logically goes a step further, and declares that the only way to nationalise man's love is to organise it under the State. Luckily, there are already some socialists logical and profound enough to see that you must nationalise not only man's labour, but also man's intellect. The result is that socialists are extending their domain from that of material wealth to intellectual capital. They are developing a socialist policy of education. They see that the intellect of man, to be nationalised, must be trained, disciplined, and cultivated systematically, and this can only be done by the State. State schools in the interests of the people is the cry of the socialist party, just as much as State factories, State mines, State agriculture, State forests. But the day is sure to come when socialists, prompted by the principle as yet half unconsciously regulating their programme, will realise that the supreme sphere of activity for the State is religion. As I have just said, man's love, his dream of the millennium, his vision of a heavenly society, his passionate yearning to see it realised

in England—these are, as at least John Ruskin knew, the real wealth, the real capital of a nation. The socialist will some day see that there is ultimately no wealth but spiritual wealth. The values of other commodities are all derived from the touch of disinterested love. Socialists will before long realise that religion first must be nationalised, and then rapidly enough commerce and agriculture will be added to the State's sphere of control and ownership.

So the Anglican is right in his claim that the Church should be established by the State. He is in so far a socialist. He is a socialist in religion. Other socialists may believe only in State railways and State coal-mines and the like ; but he believes in a State God. The day will come when all so-called socialists will believe in a State Church, and every true Anglican will believe in State mines and means of transportation.

I have said that the Anglican, in so far as he believes in a State Church, is a socialist. But I have carefully avoided the error of declaring that he was a democratic socialist or a social democrat. He is a paternal socialist, like Bismarck and the Emperor William II. He is a socialist ; but because he himself is above, he believes in socialism from above down. He believes in a State Church for the people, but not yet by the people, which is the democratic clause in the definition of social democracy. There is hope, however, for everyone who believes in a strong State. It is infinitely harder to convert a man from the doctrine of *laisser-faire* to the doctrine of State ownership and control than it is to convert the extremest Tory believing in a strong State into a democrat. Tory democracy is not half so much a self-contradiction as Liberal socialism. For the whole tradition of Liberalism, so far as it has promulgated philo-

sophic theories of statecraft, has been that of non-interference on the part of the State. Herbert Spencer came to the rescue of the man *versus* the State. The socialist comes to the rescue of the man *versus* private enterprise, private joint-stock companies, private trusts.

This principle of *laisser-faire*, of non-State-interference, which is the historic principle explaining the evolution of the old-fashioned Whigs into modern Liberals, is the very life-principle of the Free Church movement. It not only led the Nonconformists at the first to become reconciled to their being separated from the State. It has, despite the spread of the new social philosophy of the State during the last twenty years, been drawing the Free Churches together in an intimate union under a Free Church Council. The object of this union is not only to consolidate the Nonconformists among themselves into a spiritual fellowship to the ends of individual salvation. It is also to strengthen their force as an aggressive body to the end of disestablishing the present organisation which presumes to call itself the Church of England, and which has unrighteously received the prestige of State patronage. In its philosophy of the Church, Nonconformity is infinitely farther astray from socialism than is the Anglican party. And the Nonconformist bodies will not so readily become institutions for teaching the principles of socialism as will the State Church be converted to the principles of democracy.

The Nonconformists regard themselves as democrats. But they know well enough, and everybody knows, that they are not social democrats. They are of the other kind. They are individualists. They are anti-State democrats ; whereas the word social democrat is only another term for State democrat. The State democrat is one who recognises that to secure to every individual of the nation

his full liberty and rights, and to establish equality and fraternity, the State must interfere in the interests of each and must control the whole in the interests of everyone. The anti-State democrat says, Let every individual look after himself. The State democrat says, No ; let the State look after every individual. Let the State protect every individual from the greed, the ambition, the unscrupulous self-assertion of others.

English Nonconformity illustrates many of the grotesque and lamentable peculiarities of private-enterprise democracy—a contradiction in terms and a source of confusion in real life. The sects have each shut themselves off from regenerating touch with the life of the many who are outside their own petty organisations. They began with protest against traditions that trammelled. They are already to-day turning the whole of their energy to the upholding of their peculiar evangelical tenets, which already are obsolete. Thus they have become not running waters of life, but stagnant pools of ancient faiths. The sects sprang from the democratic spirit only a few generations ago. But, while that spirit induced them to cast off to some degree the aristocratic forms of church government and the extremest anti-democratic dogmas of the Church of Rome, the dogmas which they inherited were far from being wholly democratic. In comparison with the ideas and convictions of our age, these doctrines of Nonconformity are positively anti-democratic. Yet already the Nonconformist organisations hold these old teachings to be inviolable. They have shut their doctrinal life off from the modifying forces of national thought.

For instance, in throwing off the authority of the priest, they fell back upon the authority not of living reason, not of the social conscience day by day and year

by year, but of the Bible. They did not look, as they would if they had originated in an age like ours, for redemption to the historical quickening and illuminating power of the continuously working social will. They, in the old pre-scientific and undemocratic way, continued to look to an outside and miracle-working deity. Nothing could be more anti-democratic and unmodern. Thus their religious ideas are an inheritance from times against which the new spirit has revolted. That they still cling to these ideas can only be explained by the fact that they, in their sectarian exclusiveness, unwittingly cut themselves off from contact with the newer ideas. Because of their being cut off from the State and through it from the currents of national life, they are foredoomed. Only a revolution within them will shatter the old trammels and give them from within the power to re-form themselves. Except in the throes of a great social upheaval, the Nonconformists will never adopt the policy of allowing the living congregation to judge continually afresh on the fundamental problems of life and to transform inherited dogmas and ceremonials accordingly.

As I have pointed out before, in England there is fruitful discussion only concerning those matters in which the House of Commons interferes ; and only in those matters are there continual growth and deepening insight. Yet the Nonconformist bodies congratulate themselves that there is little danger but that the House of Commons will leave them devoutly alone, even if it should presume to lay violent hands upon the Established Church. Thus isolated, independent and out of touch, and without that intimacy with the leaders of other bodies which produces sympathetic understanding,—no wonder that the Nonconformist bodies have never received any new revelation

after the initial impulse which organised them. The reason of the whole nation, the living consciousness of the entire people, is the eternal revealer. To that they have never appealed, and accordingly from it there has come to them no new message for our times. Their religion is out of touch with modern thought in the sense that its fundamental principle is antagonistic to the method and results of modern research. It does not satisfy modern needs, and its forms are as antiquated as if they were more definitely fixed. Their preachers and priests to-day are not preachers of the people as were George Fox, John Bunyan, and Wesley. This is because in accepting their separation from the State they shut themselves off from the life of the community.

In accepting that separation, they practically rejected the principle of the government of all for all by all. Yet in religion, as in civil life, the application of this principle is the only possible method of arriving at national unity. This principle in the sphere of religion is the only means of attaining to universal truth. In direct opposition to this method, the sects ask to be let alone and boast that they are let alone. Chiefly would they resent any interference by the House of Commons in matters spiritual as an act of impiety.

Nonconformity in its pride has closed its heart, as it seems to me, against the redemptive power of social democratic national idealism. It has failed wholly to see that contact with all the surging and conflicting thoughts and efforts in the whole nation is necessary if it is to keep quite sane and broadly human in its religious beliefs. It has failed to realise that every individual must put himself into receptive and sensitive yet jealous and alert relation with the entire spirit of the times, in order to

be able by reaction to contribute his own wisdom and experience to the nation's spiritual fund. As with each individual, so with each religious society which has been separated from the State. As compared with what the Nonconformist bodies would have become had they been under State recognition, they have grown rigid, cold, and half dead. They have become, as compared with the general life and thought of the world to-day, morbid and dogmatic, priggish, self-satisfied, and scarcely conscious of the defects which their isolation has bred in them.

From the point of view of national democracy, schism, sectarianism, splitting off from the State, or acquiescing in being split off from the State, is a great sin. Witness the moral evils which have settled down upon John Wesley's once vital and quickening movement, because it cut itself off or was cut off from contact with the State. Wesley's movement during his life was the most ethical and vital since Luther's. Yet until recently it went on splitting up and splitting up again within itself. And each new group of Methodists has been proud of its aloofness. Now, however, since its preachers have for a generation been allowed access to the universities and thus have come into contact with the general currents of English idealism, it has been receiving new energy from outside. Methodism is beginning once more to wake up. Still, however, it has not thought of demanding recognition by the State. But it is drawing into Christian union with various kindred sects. The same impulse which has prompted this union would lead to readmission into the Established Church, except for the Nonconformist heresy that churches should be separate from the State.

The glorious movement of the Society of Friends reveals the same tragic decay from within because it also has never been in organised unity with the whole nation's

life. At first the Quaker movement was not only quickened by the spirit of democratic communion—that is, by the Holy Ghost—but it was clearly conscious that the democratic spirit is the Holy Ghost. The Society of Friends, however, as an organisation and as an upholder of the simple life, is dying out. As a quickener of the nation's fundamental thoughts about the inner light it is practically dead.

Witness also the melancholy fate of Unitarianism. It has been the only religious organisation with religious assemblies and services to champion human reason. Yet as an organisation it to-day scarcely preserves its earlier dimensions. Many Unitarians even admit that its work is possibly done. They think that it has perhaps permeated all other religious denominations sufficiently to justify it in retiring from aggressive propaganda. But what one must ask is, Why has the Unitarian body not absorbed new light, new strength, and new enthusiasm? Why has it dwindled, grown feeble and quiescent? Even if it did not care to become an active disseminator of the truths and methods which it had already realised in itself, were there no truths as yet undiscovered, were there no improvements in method, could it not have become a pioneer and attempted to conquer new worlds of principle and fact and new policies and disciplines? To me the deplorable decline of Unitarianism cannot otherwise be explained than on the ground that its being separated from the State meant inevitably intellectual as well as moral death to it. Its fatal error was its approval of its own isolation.

As one reads the history of all the sects in England, their rise and fall, their great promise of becoming a national inspiration and their pitiable resignation at being allowed to exist at all, and the pride of some of them

that they more than hold their own—these characteristics and tendencies make one feel that for a Church to be content with separation from the State is worse than an error. It is a proof that the sect has become self-centred. It is a sign that pride has blinded the judgment. Separation from the nation's life as an organised whole is schism, and the spirit of schism is sin against the only redeeming power, the general will of the community. The deadening effects of this sin set rapidly in ; and in a few brief generations the strength is gone out of the body that practises it.

Social democracy in religion means the moral idealism of the nation subjected to incessant debate ; it means the corrections arising from debate ; it means a continual reorganisation of the Church by the authority of Parliament. It means in religion just what it means in industry —ownership and control by the living community : the ownership of the powers in man and nature that make for righteousness. It means the ownership and control of the instruments of disciplining character, of fostering virtue, of opening the eyes of reason, of training the moral judgment by bringing the attention of every man and woman and every child to bear upon the great issues and ends of life. Social democracy in religion means that the nation itself shall guide the way which shall not only be salvation to the individual, but health, long life and innocent gladness to the nation itself and to all other peoples of the world. Social democracy in religion means a Church of the whole people by the whole people for the whole people—women and men alike.

But when we begin to compare the principles, methods, and outlook of social democracy in religion with the peculiar forms of anti-democratic government and teaching which have prevailed among all religious bodies, we are

especially struck by one peculiarity which makes the anti-democratic governments and sentiments in religion harder to reform and remove than similar prejudices and customs in any other department of social life. If, for instance, we consider anti-democratic methods of land tenure we find that, while it is a form of government and ownership by the few and for the few, at the expense of the many, nevertheless the few for whom the land is monopolised are always the living few, and never the few of a past generation. It is in the interest of the present landlords and of their children that the monopoly is preserved. Now, this is infinitely less irrational and preposterous than if there were no living few whom the monopoly served. If the landlords to-day were conservative against their own interests and simply out of blind deference for their great-great-grandfathers, there would be a parallel in the land customs to what prevails in the religious customs. The land laws of England, however iniquitous from the point of view of social justice, are not only by the living landlords of our day, but they are for the living landlords of our day. These, having the power, can change the laws their ancestors made, and do change them whenever they detect that the laws can be made still more favourable to themselves. But as regards the moral wealth of the nation and the means of spiritual discipline which the churches and chapels possess and control, we find the absolute dictation of a few persons of a past generation. We find, furthermore, that the dictation in that day was comparatively democratic. It was done not for a few then living, but presumably in the interests of the whole nation. What we, however, forget to-day is that compared with the numbers now living, and still more compared with all who have lived in the intervening time, the many who were benefited by church methods of past

generations are relatively a few. We are preserving to-day methods that spiritually did help in the time of Edward VI., or Oliver Cromwell, or Charles II., or George III. From this point of view we see that not even the most professedly democratic of the sects are in any way really democratic. For all of them uphold a practice made by a few of a former generation for a generation long since dead. The Methodist churches of our day, although John Wesley has been dead more than a century, are still governed by his thought, and for a kind of people, under a kind of condition, which no longer exist anywhere. Anglicanism plus social democracy would mean the religious life of all the Englishmen throughout the nation organised year by year by the Englishmen living in each year for the Englishmen that shall be living till the nation ceases to exist.

Let it be clearly observed that a recognition of the claims of social democracy upon the judgment of devout Anglicans does not involve a committal to any specific forms, creeds, or ceremonies. The essence of social democracy is that the responsibility for religious doctrines must rest each hour with the Church government of that hour. Consistent with this leaving of the people free perpetually to cast and recast their statements and even the principles they teach is the attitude I have assumed throughout this volume. I have not urged that a version of the Prayer Book as I would revise it is a thing which ought to replace the present version or the forms in the Dissenting bodies. My whole argument has contrariwise favoured religious inclusion and comprehension. Side by side, rather than trammel the free spirit, let a hundred rival creeds and forms be encouraged. Let majorities respect minorities. Thus only as a result of centuries of effort, adaptation, and growth, if ever, will there come

complete uniformity ; and even then through no forcible suppression of anyone's individuality. Thus there never would be danger that the teachings and disciplines of the past would trammel the free development of the nation in its spiritual evolution. I anticipate an epoch generations long in which religious controversy will dominate. Such was the case immediately before and during Cromwell's rule. But then the leaders of the Church, instead of favouring it, attempted to suppress free discussion. Now, however, will begin an era where the leaders of the historic organisations will themselves invite and stimulate the fullest and freest expression of the most original opinions. Doubt will become an instrument of faith. Authority will be dethroned, and in its place the private judgment set. For it will be seen that the private judgment must in the end become one with universal reason. If a man thinks freely he will think fully ; and to think fully is to think without any eccentricity or whim or private bias. It is to think as a perfect mind and a perfect mastery of the matter in hand would lead one to think.

We have, I believe, already entered upon an era in which every sincere religious thinker will act upon the principle formulated by Milton, when he says, "Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions ; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." All men will see, as Milton saw, that "a religion forbidden to improve, instead of growing upwards into statelier proportions, breaks into lateral deformities as the only vent for its vitality." And again he says, "Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain. If her waters flow not in a perpetual progression they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. He

who thinks we are to pitch our tents here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation that the mortal glass wherein we contemplate can show us, that man by this very opinion declares that he is yet far short of the truth. The light which we have gained was given us not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover upward things, more remote from our knowledge." Nor can I resist the temptation to quote that wonderful passage from Milton which well might be headed "Anglicanism plus Social Democracy":—"Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself: what does He then but reveal Himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen; I say as His manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of His counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city; a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies?"

The true Anglican will not only welcome such freedom of controversy as Milton counted to be the one means of arriving at religious truth, but he will organise these intellectual energies. It will not be individualistic thinking, but co-operative thinking ; not private co-operative thinking, but co-operative thinking systematised by the State itself. The true Free Churchman advocates the very opposite.

They both believe that the supreme concern, the supreme good, is the spiritual welfare of the individual. But, says the Free Churchman, let every man save his own soul. The State shall not dare to interfere. The Anglican says, Let the State save to every man his own soul. Let the State protect each soul from the possible unscrupulous encroachments of every other. The Anglican associates the State with the Church, and, as I have said, therefore the State with God. The State, in the Anglican view, is the supreme instrument of God whereby the souls of individuals shall be preserved from contamination by the wicked. I believe I have made clear the philosophic kinship of Anglicanism and socialism, at the same time that I have given full recognition to the undemocratic or even anti-democratic spirit which still prevails in Anglican circles. But I think I have already justified philosophically my contention that there is more hope for an anti-democratic socialist than for an anti-socialistic democrat. Until the Nonconformists renounce their policy of disestablishment and of private enterprise in religion, they cannot escape the charge of being anti-socialistic democrats in the sphere of the nation's religious life. They believe in private joint-stock companies, in private trusts, so far as the organisation and ownership of moral wealth is concerned.

When the Labour party of England fully realises these

divergent tendencies of Nonconformity and Anglicanism, it will extend the domain of its own agitation beyond the State nationalisation of material wealth and of schools to a defence of the State Church. It will see quite clearly that, exactly as it will be easy to democratise State schools before it can democratise private schools, so it can do the same with a State Church before it can with private-enterprise churches. I would not reiterate too much, but perhaps may be allowed once more to sum up this significant distinction by saying that it will be harder to convert individualists, however democratic, to any kind of socialism than to convert the Anglican kind of socialists into the socialistic kind of democrats. It would seem, therefore, as if Anglicanism were a golden candlestick on the altar of the Church waiting to receive the lighted candle of social democracy.

There is a second characteristic of Anglicanism in which it is as distinguished from Nonconformity as by its belief in the union of Church and State. Its conception of the Church itself is organic and social, whereas the ecclesiastical philosophy of the Free Churches has always been atomic and individualistic. The Free Church bodies are aggregations, federations of voluntary atoms which come together. The whole of a free church is nothing more than the arithmetical sum of its separate parts. Every free church is built up on Rousseau's social contract. It is as much of an individualistic concern as any business company into which people enter on a bargain of gain and benefit. No Free Churchman respects his church as much as he does himself. If he does, he ought to leave it and join the Anglicans. For the whole philosophy of Anglicanism is, so to speak, a deification of the Church. The Bride of Christ is, as it were, Christ living and working in the world to-day.

According to Anglicanism, the Church is the organic unit of spiritual life, and not the individual man or woman. The individual does not give to the Church its moral power, but gets his moral power from the Church. The general is before the particular in the order of socialistic philosophy.

Everyone is familiar with the intense devotion of the Anglican to his Church. Philosophically and psychologically, this is justifiable and explicable to anyone who believes, as I do, that the real source of moral enthusiasm is the general will of any group of persons in devotion to the moral ideal. If anyone believes, as I do, that the general, the unifying and organising will of the Church is what the New Testament and the profounder writers of the Church meant by the "Holy Ghost," he will understand and approve the Anglican's passionate religious fervour for the Church herself. She is, as it were, the living Christ, the living God. In a chapter on "Prayer in Humanistic Religion" I shall dwell at such length upon the identity of the social community in its vital principle with the factor in religious experience which is called divine that I need do no more than refer here to the connection which this socialistic doctrine of the Church among Anglicans has with religious philosophy. The special point which I wish now to emphasise is the contrast between Anglicans and Nonconformists both in their theory of the Church and their enthusiasm for it.

When socialists more profoundly grasp the inner secret and more widely survey the scope of their movement, they will be sure consciously to assert the religious and spiritual character of their philosophy and their mission. They will then constitute themselves a church as well as a political party. When they do, their fervour for their church will be exactly like that of the Anglican for his,

and on precisely the same grounds and with fully as much justification. They will, moreover, if I mistake not, themselves recognise their kinship with the Anglican party in the English Church. It is also to be anticipated that the Anglicans themselves, being by religious philosophy believers in the *Zeit-Geist*, will recognise the Church which the socialistic party will found as mystically one with that which they themselves have worshipped.

Having justified thus my calculation that Anglicanism, and not Free-Churchism, plus social democracy equals the kingdom of heaven in England, let me indicate a chief characteristic of social-democratic religion as contrasted with what to-day is being offered to the poor by the sermons and the services of Church and chapel.

Religion, when it becomes social-democratic in spirit, will teach self-respect as the primal religious virtue. And it will base its scheme of redemption on self-respect. From the point of view of idealistic humanism, an almost inexpiable sacrilege was committed against the Most High by supernatural religion, in that everything that seemed to emanate from man and yet was beautiful and adorable, pure and holy, was attributed and accredited to a superhuman and supernatural source, while everything that was base or mean or unclean was assigned to human nature. In order to glorify a transcendent deity, the very last vestige of self-respect was beaten out of common mortals by the teachers and preachers of religion. Not only man's outward deeds, but the inward devotion of his heart, so far as he had any right to claim it as his own, was counted as filth. In an agony of self-loathing and self-abasement men were expected to cast themselves down, conscious of utter demerit, before a being who was neither man nor nature, and held man both soul and body with a grip all-powerful. This teaching is Roman

Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Wesleyan. Yes, it is even the doctrine of the Quakers. George Fox himself, when questioned by Oliver Cromwell, asserted that the Inner Light was not man's light. When Cromwell assented to the existence of the Inner Light, but insisted that it was natural, George Fox protested that it was supernatural. Every one of the denominations has given the lie direct to man's higher nature, to the very essence of his selfhood, to the very witness of his own self-conscious spirit. No wonder that the people fell under the power of the priests and their allies the princes. How deep was the infamy of the crime of branding this lie upon human nature we can see when we realise that now, after well-nigh two centuries of growing democracy, democracy is only beginning, in this twentieth century after Christ, to find the philosophic and religious clue to its own deep, mysterious power. Only now is the doctrine of God's Immanence preached, and only now is it realised that this doctrine means the identity of the supreme saving power in the universe with each individual man's and woman's own higher selfhood.

It is to this day supposed that a man who respects himself and acts from self-respect lacks religion and is failing in piety. To this hour not one in a hundred thousand has begun to identify respect for Self with respect for God, and to lift up his head in the conscious dignity of the glory and the power of manhood, while attributing the evil in himself to extraneous and accidental causes—to error and ignorance. We see to-day that the good is normal, that the perfect is the fulfilment of what is prefigured in man's nature, despite all his wickedness and error. We see that the evil is abnormal as regards the constitution, and therefore the fundamental trend, of man. It is true that the evil is a part of the universe,

and therefore the universe itself as such is neither good nor evil, neither good nor bad. We see also that human beings, being conscious, are both good and bad. But the goodness is organic, is structural, is constitutional. The bad is a foreign growth. We see that man's conscious purpose, in proportion as his intelligence is awake and his experience wide, is distinctly on the side of his constitution. Thus is it with every individual human being. Still more is there hope in the undeniable fact that in every unit the communal will, the general purpose of the social group, is distinctly on the side of the good and set to the extirpation of the bad. It is as monstrously untrue to facts and experience to say that the bad is to be assigned to human nature and all real and essential goodness is due to the inflowing of supernatural and superhuman grace as it would be to say that insanity is natural and sanity supernatural. In proportion as a man is not sane he is not a man. It is true that insanity is natural in the universe ; but it is not constitutional, structural, organic to man. When a man becomes insane he ceases to be a man. There is something external that has obliterated the human. What horror could be more awful than to imagine that men by their would-be guides and friends should be persuaded that lunacy was the inevitable condition of every mortal until some superhuman power, irrespective of man's right and despite his condition, communicated some outside understanding and wisdom ? Were it not an almost unforgivable wrong to persuade a man that he was blind, and thus make him blind ? For such is the effect. The idea suggested takes, as it were, a demoniacal possession and works out its hideous mischief, and then the effects themselves seem to substantiate and fortify the lie. I will not say that those who taught that all good comes from a superhuman source were

conscious liars. But one is justified in asserting that this doctrine arose among people high in social station, those that had tasted of power and found it sweet, and were drunk with the wine of privilege and prestige. This doctrine is a false interpretation of what the Old and New Testaments say. There is scarcely a syllable in the Bible to justify it. It sprang up as the Christian faith began to take possession of the ruling classes of the Roman Empire. It came into being when the Christian organisations became the spiritual supporters of the oligarchic power of Rome. There is nothing in the Bible that says that the God to be worshipped is outside of man and nature. And, now that our eyes are opened, now that the natural and human meaning of the sayings attributed to Jesus can be understood by us, it is perfectly evident that his was a teaching the direct opposite of the mediæval theory of man's nature.

Social democracy is beginning at last to interpret itself psychologically and ethically. The result is that it is assuming the majesty of a religious revelation, revealing the better part of man to himself. But this revelation could not have come about were it not that now for more than a hundred years in the actual struggle of class with class the higher nature of man has been asserting itself and organising itself into a mighty power for social redemption. The people have risen up and thrown off tyrants. The high mountains have been brought low and the valleys have been raised. Working men have been found to be men, which means they have been found to be gods—self-reliant, defiant, creative, ready to die for the good. Even women for nigh a century have been growing conscious that no frailty of body, no handicap of physical function, can detract from the dignity and the ultimate assertion of the God in them. The poets of the

nineteenth century delighted to sing of the new liberty that came to the slave and to those in prison. Out of these experiences and social trends, to account for them and give them place in the philosophy of life, has sprung the new doctrine of the immanent God.

I am aware that many persons speak slightingly of this teaching. And of the man who is now making it current coin throughout the whole Anglo-Saxon world the disparaging word goes forth that he lacks the learning of the divinity school. This well may be, for the divinity schools have been the centres for the propagation of the unforgivable insult to human nature. It will be easier to prove the lack of scholastic theology than the lack of living humanity in the doctrine of the immanence of God. This doctrine is not so much a deduction from the *a priori* principles current in the old-fashioned theology as a transcript in thought of the great fact in life that man's redemption is coming from man himself, and not from outside ; from self-respect, and not from self-distrust.

If there be any truth which the new study of history in relation to philosophy has demonstrated beyond a doubt, it is that always the fundamental teachings of thinkers and of prophets have sprung directly out of the living contemporary struggles and hopes and triumphs of classes of men recently come into power, and that then these ideal reflections in thought of the new trends in life themselves react upon the trends, hasten their movement, steady their pace, and keep their direction true to their ideal goal. The mediæval doctrine of the corruption of human nature and the theory of the outside and superhuman deliverer was the mark and token of the ascendency of the Christian priest. The new teaching of the immanence of God and of salvation in and

through the combined effort of men is the badge and token, the symbol and the sign, of the new ascendency of the people. Democracy has been a growing fact, until it is now flowering into an idealistic philosophy. That philosophy, backed by the people, to whom it comes as the word of deliverance and of fulfilment, will sweep the mediæval teaching out of existence, and with it the priestly class who perpetuated its ascendency. What until recently has been counted piety will now pass for what it is : blasphemy. The growing ascendency of the people is the triumph of the whole of the community as a co-operative commonwealth, spiritual and material.

What zest, what lifting up of the head, what clearing of the eye and steadying of the gaze, what new elasticity of tread, what consecration of the human body, what awful but sublime sense of personal responsibility, what enhancing of the value of every individual life, because of its participation in the divine as a part of the providence of man, enters in as the heritage of every mortal with the throwing off of the old dogma and the taking to heart of the new philosophy of religion !

In a generation reared on the doctrine that one's deeper self is God there will be no drunkards, no prostitutes, no suicides, none driven to despair and madness by the meaninglessness of life. And after a generation has been bred to the teaching of the religion of self-respect, there will be no outcast class of any kind, no army of the unemployed, no children born of irresponsibility and self-indulgence, no shirking of the privileges of fatherhood and motherhood where the offspring would come favoured into life.

There is reason to think that the old-fashioned teaching was a direct discouragement to righteous conduct and to purity and enthusiasm of spirit. To teach men that

it was impossible to do right except as a superhuman power came into them and communicated the energy, was equivalent to discouraging them from exercising the power they possessed. We now see that the grace which they attributed to some being outside of the organised society of humanity really did come from the individual himself as a new creative centre, and from the stored-up virtue of the social life about him. But not to have seen this, not to have realised that one is good and does good exactly as one opens one's eyes and sees or reaches forth one's hand and helps, was to discourage from being good and doing right, unless the person had become dogmatically possessed with the formula taught by the priest. Can we imagine anything so productive of sensuality and lack of self-control as that a young man should be told that except as a superhuman Christ inspires him it is impossible for him to think and feel aright? Little harm perhaps was done in the case of the stupid who quite spontaneously and naïvely, without thinking and without reacting intellectually, accepted the Church's formula. But those who had true spiritual and prophetic gifts and turned to life rather than the lore of the priest inevitably found that the formula was not wide enough or deep enough to contain the facts.

The new religion of self-respect will be the inspiration of a mighty democratic revival. It will purify and spiritualise and humanise more thoroughly in a generation than the mediæval teaching has been able to do in a thousand years. Especially will it be of value in interpreting the new movement of the working classes in politics and in economic reform.

For a generation the more intelligent and courageous working people of the West have rightly entertained not one atom of trust that any outside deity, any super-

human saviour, was going to abolish poverty or change the iniquitous land laws or give them better homes or shorter hours of work. Jesus Christ as a superhuman deliverer has been absolutely discounted in the judgment of every conscientious and brave working man of the West. The wage-earners accept the moral personality of Jesus Christ as a man and a reformer and inspirer of the down-trodden and the outcast. But as to Jesus Christ a superhuman moral agency working directly in the world to-day, they will not hear of him. Nor ought they to do so. They know that the power that saves is their own self-sacrificing devotion to social justice, their own consecration of their talents and every spare penny above the absolute necessities of life to the organisation and propagation of the philosophy of self-respect and the co-operation of the hundreds and thousands of the self-respecting.

But this movement of co-operation among the self-reliant is something more than the doctrine of the identity of God and the constitution of man. There is a second characteristic of the religion of social democracy which is no less new, revolutionary and inspiring than the doctrine of the immanence of God. That new characteristic, which we shall consider in the following chapter, may be designated as "Christianity plus Science."

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRISTIANITY PLUS SCIENCE

CHRISTIANITY plus Science equals the Millennium.

This formula is suggested by one of Ferdinand Lassalle's, to the effect that from the union of science and social democracy will be born the Millennium. Lassalle no doubt had in mind a combination of the same historical tendencies which I have, as inevitably resulting in that earthly state of social bliss of which both the earliest Christians and modern socialists have dreamed.

But social democracy, as exemplified in Germany, France and Italy, plus science, will never bring forth the Millennium. It lacks inwardness, spirituality, moral idealism. It is the union of Christianity with Science from which will issue social democracy. Social democracy is as yet a dream. It is a vision—the vision of that same earthly state of social bliss which the early Christians expected. In so far as it is more than a vision, it is but the nucleus of social forces drawn together and polarised by the vision. The beginnings of parties which will issue some day in social-democratic commonwealths are themselves in our day the offspring of Christianity with Science.

I here define Christianity by what Christians of all denominations will assent to as its essence—the historic

movement emanating from the personality of Jesus Christ and making for the establishment of a reign of personal and social justice and purity throughout the earth. This is Christianity. Its theory and dogma are but devices of the intellect to interpret and justify it to the understanding of man, but its reality is a living tendency in society emanating from the historic Jesus Christ and growing organically in the world. It is to be interpreted by the end it has in view, and no one can deny that the end is the complete triumph of a kingdom of God of which it is itself the living anticipation. My dictum, then, means that when once this spiritual organism of Christ's Church discards supernaturalistic interests and hopes and adopts the method, spirit and results of science as dictating the means and the policy towards the advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, that Kingdom will come and come quickly. If the natural and human means be discovered in experience which would establish social and personal purity and justice on earth, and if they be applied, it is inconceivable that social and personal purity and justice would not come. It is a tautological proposition to which we have reduced the statement; but, being tautological, it is self-evident. The only question remaining is whether it be possible to discover the human and natural means towards the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. To many a mind the decision of this question settles for ever for the human heart the alternative between the two eternally divergent paths of despair and death and of hope and life abundant. If we cannot discover and apply the natural and human means to the end of Christ's Kingdom, that Kingdom is worse than a phantom, and it were better for us Christians had we never been born.

The old-fashioned expectation of a Millennium, being

based on a belief in supernatural intervention, was on that account the most unfounded if not the maddest of human delusions. But, notwithstanding, it was the sanest, sweetest, truest, humanest bent which the moral idealism of man has ever taken. The hope of a universal and lasting reign of glad innocence on earth began in the third century after Christ to be replaced by a hope of such an existence in a life after death and on another scene than the surface of this planet. But never was there such a fall both for the character and the understanding of man. When the expectation of a second coming of a supernatural founder of the kingdom of righteousness was abandoned and the human heart turned for consolation to the thought of another world, it was the setting in of an age-long night. Since then only for the briefest periods and among small groups has the millennial passion burst forth into flame, but each time it has been quickly stamped out by the powers that be, as if it were the very fire of hell.

Savonarola was a prophet not of the life after death in another sphere but of the life on earth in Italy and beginning in his own time and in Florence itself. But he paid speedily the price for having returned to the millennial hope of Christ and his immediate followers.

Martin Luther for a time after his revolt from Rome was filled and guided by the vision of an earthly Kingdom of God. And he continued to follow this gleam until the peasants, taking fire of hope from him, meant in deadly earnest to end the economic iniquities of the laws of property which had reduced them to abject poverty. Then Luther himself denied Christ and sided with the princes against the peasants. It required, however, the pouring out of the blood of two hundred thousand peasant martyrs to quench the spark in them which he himself had kindled.

Before Martin Luther, the millennial hope had lighted up all England for a time. Wiclif and the Lollards were its prophets, but the powers that be smothered out the flame. The result was that England during the fifteenth century was intellectually, morally, and as regards joy of the spirit, but a nation of cold, dead ashes.

Again the hope of a redeemed earth gained strength enough to flame forth in the moving times of Charles I. The Fifth Monarchy men under the Protectorate were millennial, but on that account were suppressed as mad. Sir Isaac Newton believed in the Millennium. In the next century Charles Wesley was millennial—that is, despite all his supernaturalism, his hope was for this world, for the poor, for England in his own day.

It was the heat of the millennial passion which in 1789 melted to ruin the ancient *régime* of France. Its fire-flakes were being wafted from across the Channel to English soil. But Burke extinguished them with the floods of his eloquence. It was fanned into flame again, however, in 1849 among the Chartists; and only the Iron Duke could stamp it out by military threat. Yet once more in the eighties in England the millennial hope reappeared—now not so much in the form of heat as of a light diffused throughout all classes of the community. Not only were the poor dockers of London on tiptoe of expectancy of a human time coming for them, not only did the lowest classes of labourers and even of women wage-earners begin to organise their claims for justice, but the towns of England at last received a form of self-government which brought civic idealism from the clouds of dreamland to the solid ground of practical politics. Quickly, however, the forces of reaction set in, so that the last decade of the nineteenth century showed the priests of supernaturalism, the princes of unscrupulous

capitalism and the soldiers of imperial greed more powerfully organised and shameless than they had been for seventy years.

Except for these brief moments, the trend of organised Christianity has been wholly away from a mundane heaven. The whole authority of teachers and preachers of religion has been used to direct the attention of the masses to a life after death, to find there the consolations for the wrongs suffered here. Even Victor Hugo commended the thought of heaven after death as the only possible palliative to the poor. But especially within Church organisations and from pulpits was it taught as the most heinous of heresies to doubt the existence of another world—meaning a life after death. Nor was any other evidence of total depravity required than a lack of interest in that other world. There is scarcely one Christian to-day in ten thousand who is aware that all this interest is not only unchristian but anti-christian, if we take the personality and thought of Christ and of the New Testament as the standard. The New Testament, despite all the supernaturalism of its writers, is from beginning to end millennial ; that is, its heaven is one whose scene is to be earth, whose centre is the very city from which Christianity emanated and whose time was their own generation.

The great joy which Christ communicated to the poor who listened to him and whom he touched was the millennial thrill. The expectation of the quick coming of justice, love, and the outward health and security which these engender, was what excited the first Christians to an ecstasy of self-sacrifice. The Book of Revelation, which is pre-eminently typical and is an authentic document of the sentiments within thirty or forty years after Christ's death of those who had known him personally, is a revelation

not at all of another world or of the individual soul after death in its relation to its maker, but of nations here on earth and of a state which was to supersede the organised power of Rome. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . . And I saw the holy city . . . . and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie."

To be millennial is to be Christian; whether the forces by which the Millennium is to be ushered in are believed to be human and natural or spiritistic is wholly beside the point. Whether God is to be regarded as a personal agent outside of the spiritual organism of human society, or as the upward gaze, the passionate self-sacrifice in the hearts of men for the establishment of the kingdom, is not of the essence of the message of Christ; all of his language can be interpreted humanistically and has thus more meaning than if taken literally in the sense of the supernaturalists. The mark of the Christian was his absolute faith and his restless desire to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, the vision of which had smitten his soul.

We thus see that throughout the Christian era all the periods of millennial enthusiasm have been brief; but they have been the only periods of creative energy, of prophetic originality and of magnificent and ecstatic self-sacrifice.

If we direct our gaze back to Judaism we discover the same mental phenomenon. The great prophets were millennial in their hope. Indeed, the ordinary Christian, with his spiritual boast of his other-worldliness as the very essence of true religion, looks down upon the Jews

not only of ancient times but even of to-day, because the Jews, despite everything, have not only kept alive themselves as a race, but within themselves have preserved as the very essence of Judaism the millennial expectation. No oppression, no insult, no contempt, no ostracism, could extinguish the divine spark at the heart of the Jew. The only question to-day is whether liberty, social recognition, flattery, aristocratic titles, riches untold, may not kill out what persecution, despite itself, secretly sustained. If so, with the ending of the millennial hope Judaism will cease to be a factor or even a fact in the world. But if the Jew has self-respect enough to withstand the seductions of prosperity, his millennial hope will burst forth and organise itself into one mighty flame which shall again be a light to the whole world and incidentally illumine the way to the re-establishment of the ancient kingdom of the Jews.

Yet, as I have said, the old-fashioned expectation of a Millennium, being based on a belief in supernatural intervention, was on that account the most unfounded if not the maddest of human delusions. Had it never been extinguished by hostile powers and interests, it would nevertheless have failed utterly. The old millennial hope bore in itself the germ of its own defeat. Had it been encouraged and favoured it would have transformed the very kingdom it established into anarchy, riot, violence and bloodshed. For it would have disappointed all the hopes which it stimulated. No supernatural redeemer ever did appear on the clouds in glory ; nor could he have come ; nor would it have been well, had he come. There must not be a personal agent outside the spiritual organism of society to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. If he came it would be our duty to reject him. The very essence of our manhood is at stake. Man must

have no kingdom which he himself has not wrought out by self-sacrifice, by thought, by sovereignty over himself and mastery over nature.

The forces to which believers in the Millennium have trusted in the past for the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness were purely imaginary. Their existence was not verifiable in experience; their control and manipulation were not within human power. On this account, the hope of realising the vision was an instance of collective insanity. It had no more substance than a sleeper's dream or a madman's hallucination.

The new hope of the Millennium is like the old in that it is an expectation of a reign of justice and love throughout the nations of the earth. Both the new and the old millennial hope differ from the pseudo-Christian hope of a heaven in another world after death, in that they include our material, physical well-being, health, wealth, leisure, and all the manifold richness and beauty of the life of the senses, as well as the perfections of the inward and spiritual nature. It is true that in the New Testament there was an intense and profound inwardness, but always with the full confidence that if the behests of the Spirit were fulfilled all other blessings should be added. It is true that St Paul believed, at least at times, in a material resurrection of the bodies of the dead. But this was only to be a momentary catastrophe; and after it the living would go on living; and, so far as one can gather, the whole implication is that human beings would go on propagating after their own kind in the natural way. Furthermore, St Paul's belief in the immortality of the individual soul never for a moment diverted him away from the earth and the nations of the earth and their future as the goal of all his effort. The millennial hope anticipates, then, a

material heaven as well as a heaven reigning within the spirit ; and this hope of a material heaven on earth was a part of the original Christianity, as it is of Christianity whenever it reappears as it was in Christ.

But while the new millennial hope is infinitely nearer to the old than either is to the counterfeit Christianity which usurps Christ's organisation, the new hope is as sane as the old was insane. Since the advent of science and the awakening of democracy through the blending of Science and Christianity, a man who does not accept the Millennium proves himself at least bad, if not mad. Only prejudice of pride, of greed, of ascendency over others, of class interests, of self-deification, of contempt for the poor and for women, can blind a man to the well-nigh infinite resources which the Church of Christ would gain were she to accept the discoveries and inventions of Science and use them and trust to them instead of trusting to miracles, to prayers to invisible spirits, and to the guidance of supernatural agents.

The great material wealth of the modern world has hitherto been associated with pride, greed, selfish ambition, excess and self-indulgence. But this is wholly because the wealth has accumulated in the hands of a few and at the expense of the many. The wealth, were it co-operatively acquired and justly distributed, would in itself be perfectly right and good and its enjoyment innocent and humane. But, more than this, wealth so produced and distributed would itself favour spirituality, inwardness of life, the love of righteousness and the readiness to die for it. For then the material wealth and all its blessings would themselves, being just and fair and a result of justice and fairness, illustrate the priority and necessity of the inner spiritual life. It is only wealth unshared that is unholy. But even then it requires little discrimi-

nation to see that the selfishness and not the wealth is really the polluted and the polluting thing. We must remember that even the Kingdom of Heaven can only be unlocked by a key of gold. But when the whole community, when the Church herself, holds the key and is ready to open the Kingdom even to the least of these, gold itself will become the symbol of righteousness.

There is no more anti-social teaching than that which glorifies poverty and the renunciation of the physical means of health, strength, comfort and leisure. It is an outrageous self-deception of the rich which makes them imagine that the poor are as happy as those who have security of necessities and a fair share of comforts and opportunities, of education, travel, art, and every other blessing which wealth can give to those who know how to use it aright. Let the poor resent with their whole souls' indignation the teaching of resignation to a poverty which compels them to give nine-tenths of all their attention to the means of a livelihood, while allowing them no leisure to live. When the Church discards her supernaturalism and adopts natural means for the redemption of the world from sin and misery, she will adopt an ideal not of poverty but of wealth.

There is a powerful argument for a naturalistic millennial hope in the fact that a seemingly slight change in outward conditions or in the social atmosphere of a community may produce well-nigh infinite differences in inward happiness and moral character. In this respect human nature is analogous to vegetable life. Think what a very slight increase of temperature in April over the average warmth of March is necessary in order to produce all the difference in the plant world between an appearance of death and a manifestation of life. Let there be an average increase of warmth of from ten to fifteen

degrees, and every seed and branch will burst forth into fresh life and the splendour of bloom. Precisely parallel is it with mankind. Hitherto for the great masses of the people it has always been winter. Whoever has lived among the working classes knows that so slight a change for the better as an increase of half a crown a week in wages throughout all trades makes all the difference to the home life, to the children, in education, in self-resepct, in respectability, that April showers and April sunshine make to plant life as compared with March winds and the shorter daylight of winter. A decrease of working hours from fourteen to ten is a change like that from February to June. Suppose the Church transferred all her interest in a life after death to the life before death, from a society of unembodied spirits to the society of us spirits who are dependent for self-realisation upon the health and strength of our bodies. Suppose the first object in the Church's policy of human redemption were to shorten the hours of work of all wage-earners to the possible minimum, and to raise all wages to the possible maximum. Would it not be "kingdom come" not only in freedom from disease, but in innocence of life, in sympathy, love, and the pursuit of truth and beauty for their own sake?

There is no shadow of ground for doubting that natural means can be discovered for curing the chief maladies of life, in the same way—to take a special instance—that scientific men have discovered the causes and devised a prevention of the blight of the grape-vines of France. Possibly the very method and the very causes of the existing evils will be found to be analogous. Parasites pierced the roots of the French vines. Roots with a slightly thicker bark were introduced from California. The result was that

the parasites could no longer feed upon the vines ; and the parasites died. Which things are an allegory. I could cite hundreds of Christians to-day, who from their scheme for the moral redemption of the world have discarded all belief in supernatural agencies, and are now going about doing good and healing the sick exactly as Christ did, but on an infinitely greater scale. The only difference between him and them is not in themselves, but in the notion of men that Christ's means were superhuman and supernatural, while it is evident to everyone that the modern healers resort to methods purely natural and human—to methods within the reach of everyone who wills to do the same.

Another argument for a naturalistic millennial enthusiasm lies in a fact which for a supernaturalistic scheme had no significance. The fact to which I refer is that the individual men and women of the world at any given time are absolutely removed from it after a period seldom longer than fourscore years, and that the places of the old are taken by new individuals, who come into the world completely ignorant of its traditions, its intrigues, its wrongs and sufferings, and practically innocent. The new-born babe may, it is true, come with predispositions which may tempt it to active injustice and unsocial self-indulgence. But, as we have just been pointing out, the very same nature which certain circumstances would incite to injustice and self-indulgence will, if another set of circumstances act as stimuli, be quickened along lines of humane consideration for others and heroic self-control. One cannot, therefore, argue from any degree of obliquity and weakness which human nature has exhibited under past circumstances of life, that human nature would exhibit the same characteristics if differently played upon from the moment of birth. Those who are discouraged

from millennial hope on the basis that human nature is corrupt are, therefore, foolish and thoughtless. The question is whether the corruption of human nature must under any circumstances whatever manifest itself. Would the men who now for the most part yield to excess in drinking intoxicants, show this same weakness if for a whole generation the hours of all work were shortened, wages increased, every human being compelled to earn his own living by his labour, and no financial profit allowed to any individual or company, or even to the State itself, from the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks? Is drunkenness a sign of the depravity of human nature or a proof of defect in the social and economic environment?

Or take another type of moral irregularities. Suppose men had not ascendency over women by being the exclusive bread-winners, but that women had equal opportunities and were equally incited with men to earn a living and to pursue a career, and that both men and women were made by their teachers fully aware of the social and physiological significance of sex life. Would the horrors that now exist continue? Imagine, then, that all the children in the nation, from the moment they were born, came under the influence of an environment radically changed — as it would be possible even now to change it within a decade, if only the Christian Church were converted to a belief in purely human and natural means of redemption. Then it would seize upon all the means at hand, instead of continuing its colossally time-absorbing and emotion-draining system of intercession with superhuman agencies.

I have said that children are born without traditional prejudices; but what does this mean for a humanistic scheme of redemption? It means that children learn

from others class distinctions, pride of birth, contempt for women and for persons of other colour and of other nationalities. No child has any such prejudices until these are inculcated by others. Every child is absolutely and thoroughly democratic. No boy naturally and until told counts himself superior to womankind. Free a child from birth from the corrupting contact with these ideas, illustrate in his presence principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and there would be nothing in his nature or experience that would ever throw itself against such principles.

A scientific religion would be something new. There never has been a religion hitherto which was naturalistic. Yet it would be only relatively, not absolutely, new. It would not be without historic roots. It would be new only as Christianity itself was new, which had been growing in the heart of Judaism for four centuries. It would be new only in the sense in which the religion of the Reformation was new. It would be a child of history and the legitimate heir of all the ages. Its novelty would consist in its arising out of the confluence of streams of tendency which hitherto had been flowing in separate channels. Its novelty would further consist in its arising out of the awakening self-consciousness of a class which hitherto had not had the education or the intelligence or even the wealth and leisure to think for itself and to act as a class. Science, so long as its discoveries and inventions were monopolised in the interests of the leisured and rich, did not become a religion ; for those classes had already transformed historic institutions into an instrument of their own supremacy and had interpreted Christian principles in a light favourable to their own interests. It is this illicit union of inventive science with class interest that has begotten the monster of

modern competitive industry. Once remove Science from private capitalism and join it to Christ and the historic tendency which emanated from him, and there will be a religion new in resources, social philosophy and cosmic theory, but not new in the direction of hope or in ethical standards.

If I mistake not the lesson of our times, it would be as foolish now not to expect the quick coming of the kingdom of righteousness, as in Christ's day it was idle to look for it. The application of science in every direction shortens not only space but time. By scientific inventions, things can often be done in a day which used to take a year, and in a year which would have taken 365 years. Thousands of things which never could have been done at all because they could not be done rapidly are now attainable, and are attained. The shortening of time is one of the most important of all conditions in bringing achievements within human reach. Nor is it possible to find any ground for the belief that scientific methods applied to moral and spiritual culture would not be proportionately more rapid than the pre-scientific methods of the old religious discipline.

I am well aware that many scout the idea of the speedy setting aside of institutions which have lasted for thousands of years and the quick liberating and educating of classes of society which have remained in ignorant serfdom from the beginning. That most brilliant defender of government by the privileged few whom I have quoted in an earlier chapter, Mr Walter Bagehot, somewhere ridicules the notion prevalent among reformers that "in a little while—perhaps ten years or so—all human beings might without extraordinary appliances be brought to the same level." And he adds that of late our perceptions have been sharpened as to the gradual and slow nature of

progress. We realise, he says, the tedium of history, and the painfulness of results. Only a few, he points out, have advanced and participated in modern civilisation.

> We have (he says) in a great community like England crowds of people scarcely more civilised than the majority of two thousand years ago. . . . . Those who doubt should go into their own kitchens. Let an accomplished man try what seems to him most obvious . . . . in intellectual matters upon the housemaid and the footman, and he will find . . . . his audience think him mad. . . . . Great communities are like great mountains—they have in them the primary, secondary, and tertiary strata of progress; the characteristics of the lower regions resemble the life of old times rather than the present life of the higher regions. And a philosophy which does not . . . . continually emphasise the palpable differences . . . . will be a theory essentially misleading, because it will lead men to expect what does not exist, and not to anticipate what they will find.

Here is the opinion of the whole of that upper world in which Mr Bagehot evidently lived and moved and had his being—so far as it has any opinion at all. It is the judgment of the elevated classes of society when they attempt to gaze down from the giddy heights of the drawing-room to the servants' hall in the basement. It is also the philosophy of upper-class economists, calculators, and sophists.

Now, the differences between the habits and conditions of the dwellers in our lower regions and those in the higher strata of society are not exaggerated by Mr Bagehot. The only point of dispute relates to the time which it might take to raise the masses into that mental

and social self-fulfilment characteristic of the upper classes. I maintain that under favouring circumstances, with such appliances only as are already within the reach of practical economics and politics, ten years would be time enough to abolish laws and customs which have lasted two thousand years, and to establish on a firm foundation other systems of production and distribution of wealth and education and opportunity which would remain secure as long as they did not deserve to be superseded by systems socially more efficient. History has shown repeatedly and in many countries the power of man by conscious foresight and energy to do in ten years what unconscious, unplanned natural evolution would require two thousand years to achieve. As regards the appliances at hand which could work such changes, they are extraordinary, not in the sense that they are not thoroughly understood and accessible, but in the sense that hitherto they have been monopolised by the few in their own interests. Multitudes of blessings which now are exclusively within reach only of thousands could, almost with no perceptible increase of cost, be dispensed to millions. We live in an age of duplicators, mimeographs, linotype machines, and rotary presses. These are analogous to many devices for the dissemination, with enormous decrease of cost, of countless opportunities.

Mr Bagehot forgets that the millions of individuals who to-day live under an oppressive system two thousand years old, came themselves, as I emphasised above, fresh into the world only twenty or fifty years ago ; and so recently as at their birth they were altogether human in shape, human in promise, and human in their ability to respond sensitively to whatever environment might close in upon them. When once it had closed in they were soon fixed —doomed. So it is that an accomplished man need only

descend to his kitchen and try intellectual matters upon the housemaid and the footman to find that great communities heap great mountains on human beings the instant they are born. Furthermore, even the mountainous weight superimposed upon them does not quite crush out the life. It is intelligent and rational self-abnegation which makes the poor submissive. They see as plainly as day that it is altogether an impossibility for them as individuals to rise. But we are now witnessing the growth of a realising sense among the poor that what they cannot accomplish as individuals they may by combination. The working classes in more countries than one know that if they combine they can in a decade blow sky-high and pulverise structures as old as the Pyramids and bigger.

The truth is, Mr Bagehot's view as to the stability of upper-class distinctions and as to the long, long time it will take to render human the lower strata of society, is altogether superficial, pedantic, and mechanical. Human beings, even at the bottom of England, are not as yet by any means exhausted centres of spiritual and social power. They still think, aspire, renounce, suffer, and wait. In the highest things it is quite possible that the housemaid and the footman are nearer the insight of the Founder of the Kingdom of Heaven than is the accomplished man who thinks it will take them countless ages to reach to the moral and intellectual standard of the higher regions of present-day society. Upper-class men lack sympathetic imagination, or they would see sociological factors, the oversight of which renders their theories altogether as unscientific as they are inhuman. For all their accomplishments, they fail to detect so patent a fact of our day as that which Lowell represented the returned Christ as finding. They would see that the thrones and altars which are built on the bodies and souls of living men are not secure.

They would hear bitter groans under the very foundation-stones. They would mark great fissures that rend the walls and open wider as the living foundations heave and sigh. Surely in ten years it will be possible for Christianity plus Science to lift the maid and the footman higher than the drawing-room of to-day. Whatever height one man has reached to-day, although it has taken ten thousand years for the achievement, may easily be accessible in ten years to every man and woman in the nation. Discoveries known only to the finder one day may be the possession of the whole intellectual world the next, and of every schoolboy the following year. One invention, the secret of one man to-day, may revolutionise the practice of ten thousand years in one year, and does so. Mr Bagehot was really very foolish.

When considered from the point of view of psychology, the permanence of the differences of education, taste, and capacity in the various social strata is seen to depend almost wholly upon the unconsciousness of the masses to-day as to their own power and opportunity. But scarcely half the people of England could read a full generation ago. Now that they can and do both read and write, and that literature in their interests is being systematically circulated among them, it would seem no difficult feat, should a few set about the task, to wake them up fully to their own responsibilities and moral privileges. There is no reason for not hoping for what at first thought seems the most unlikely of all occurrences—the conversion of the priests and preachers of Christianity to the spirit, method, and results of Science and to her mastery over nature as the legitimate and rightful means in hastening the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven.

If Mr Bagehot intends to imply that the inborn brain-

power of members of the lower classes of society is as far behind that of the upper classes as was the brain-power of all men two thousand years ago, the answer is that the brain-capacity of people of the same race two thousand years ago was, for all we know, in no wise inferior to brain-power to-day. There has been no evolution of the stock of the upper classes as distinct from the stock of the lower classes, and there has been no evolution of the stock of the race of any class in two thousand years, or apparently in ten thousand. So it is kinder to Mr Bagehot to imagine, as he does not say, that the inferiority he attributes to the working classes is not at all that of inborn capacity, but of arrested development due to adverse environment.

This question of native power and capacity leads us to another aspect in which Christianity plus Science will be able to do mightier works than ever did Christianity plus Supernaturalism. The whole knowledge of our day, especially that of plant and animal life, leads to the belief that we can not only transform man's environment so that it shall be favourable to whatever powers the individual has, but that we may develop the stock of the race itself. Man's artificial selection and control of the stock from which plants and animals spring, and his gradually increasing knowledge of the laws, both qualitative and quantitative, which heredity reveals, together with man's increasing sense of the necessity of preventing the human race from degenerating, point to the prevention of the practice of bringing undesirable human beings into the world. Persons not fit to propagate the species will either voluntarily abstain from doing so, or will be forced by public opinion to abstain. On the other hand, when once the situation is laid bare to the imaginations of men, those who could transmit qualities desired of the nation

will either voluntarily have large families, or will be constrained by public opinion and expectation to render such service to the nation. If not in our day, there is reason to believe that in the course of a century of such investigation and reflection as have taken place during the last generation, a knowledge will be attained which will guide us in these matters. Already we know perfectly well that families distinguished for sobriety, intelligence, integrity, and sympathy transmit such qualities to offspring, and that persons descended on both sides from what is recognised as excellent stock are more apt than not to be capable of serving the nation well.

Imagine now that all the priests and preachers of England, adding Science to Christianity, should transform it into a Religion of Eugenics, and—never once dogmatising beyond the tentative results and theories of observers—should preach as the foremost responsibility of man and woman that of paternity and maternity. What a revolution, what a new strengthening of the foundations of the nation! Imagine that young men and maidens, years before the age for marrying, should know all that has been known or generalised about heredity. Suppose they should know all the experiments that had been made with plants and animals in artificial selection. Knowledge of heredity inevitably would direct the choice of human beings in the selection of mates. Those who know most of the psychology of sex know that there is no instinct in human nature more susceptible to domination by ideational forces than that which attracts the sexes. Thus the successors of Christ in the organisation for the founding of the Kingdom of Heaven, besides the new mastery of environment, will have also the new mastery of man over his own offspring. Even the numbers of the population of any nation are in the control of the religious teachers and

educators, by the preaching of National Idealism and the force of a new public opinion. The numbers shall be neither too many nor too few. We know that in general the size of every family is at last in the will of the heads of that family. But that will itself is amenable to public praise and censure, and could not withstand the expressed claims of the community. This being the case, the quantity as well as the quality of human beings will henceforth be under the Providence of the nation, the State, the Church of Christ.

# CHAPTER IX

## PRAYER IN HUMANISTIC RELIGION

The notion prevails that praises, expressions of gratitude and petitions addressed to some Higher Power must be dropped out of religious practices, when once the trust in superhuman agencies is abandoned. What remains, it is asked, to be thanked for blessings received? What is left to praise? Could there be any sense in appealing to a Being not conscious and therefore incapable of knowing what we asked?

Less thoroughgoing are other conclusions as to the practical consequences of limiting our moral trust to human beings under natural law. It is declared that prayer may continue when we give up the supernatural, but can have efficacy only by reflex action. Every aspiration, it is said, is a prayer; and it does us good to aspire. The practice of asking, praising, and expressing gratitude, although no one hears us, is wholesome for us. Sweeping is good for the broom, even if the floor be made no cleaner. It is said that after all the essence of prayer was not the asking for anything of anyone but the inward meditation, the serene contemplation; and that such reflection is involved in all communion with a superhuman deity and yet is independent of it. Thus prayer, even the

form of address, may be preserved on account of the mental exercise it entails.

These conclusions seem to have been reached before making any analysis of the mental processes involved in prayer and without any comparison of attitudes of mind towards natural factors of experience analogous to attitudes towards supernatural agents. They seem to have been reached without a preliminary study of the general custom of petitioning, praising, and expressing gratitude to natural beings, practised by all great imaginative writers both of poetry and prose—with no shadow of reference to belief in supernaturalism.

If we approach the question of the use of prayer in naturalistic religion from the point of view of literature and psychology, we find that prayer—not simply mental but spoken, not simply private but social and public—will be more than justified. Such prayer is efficacious not only on account of its reflex action within the suppliant, but also because it is positively answered by outside beings and powers. This efficacy of prayer will also be found to concern not simply inward and spiritual states but material possessions and outward circumstances—health, wealth, and success in life. Nor will it consist simply in passive contemplation of great realities and ends, nor in any imaginary communion with these. On the contrary, prayer will retain as its essence petition to an outside Being, and the nature of the answer to prayer will be the actual response of a Higher Power. These responses will be such that they are veritably dependent upon the petition. Had the suppliant not asked, he would not have got what he asked for.

Now to our analysis, psychological and literary. When we give up supernatural personal agencies who might answer petitions, we have not altogether lost out of our

lives personal agencies who may hear and answer supplications. Human beings, close at hand and powerful to help, still remain in countless numbers round about us. Only on the notion that supernaturalism is essential to religion can it be maintained that a supplication to a personal agent for help is religious so long as the agent is supernatural and superhuman but ceases to be religious the moment the agent appealed to is human and natural. The fundamental contention of naturalistic religion is that if a practice is religious when done in relation to beings outside of man and nature, it must be equally so in relation to beings within the universe of our social experience.

Apply this principle to the Lord's Prayer. If the petition "Give us our daily bread" is religious when addressed to a personal Creator conceived of as hearing and caring and able to provide for us, it is none the less so if addressed to fellow-mortals round about us. Likewise with the supplications "Lead us not into temptation" and "Deliver us from evil." Suppose anyone should utter these petitions to men and women round about him, believing that they could give him the bread and the moral protection he needs and would do it if petitioned. Suppose he were filled with a profound sense of his dependence upon them and upon their willingness. Suppose he were in dire necessity—not only he but his family. Then all the elements of religious intensity and yearning and humility and hope would be manifested in him. Also there would be the powers at hand, mighty to save, ready to help, needing only to be asked in sincerity and with good cause. How then, at least as regards these three clauses of the Lord's Prayer, can it be said that the moment our belief in a supernatural personal agency vanishes, that instant we must

perforce cease to cry out, "Give us this day our daily bread," "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"?

Or take the clause, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive those who are indebted to us." If this supplication be an act of religion in the soul and on the lips when addressed to an invisible agency, our contention is that it is equally so—equally a prayer, equally a petition to an outside Personal Power, to a source of redemption and consolation—when addressed to one's fellow-men. They can forgive. Morally, they must forgive. The imperative is absolute; and there can be no hint of superstition or presumption in asking fellow-mortals to forgive us in proportion as we have forgiven other fellow-mortals. No scepticism, no materialism, no agnosticism can in any degree undermine the foundations of this prayer when addressed to fellow-mortals. The occasion for both thinking and uttering it remains as great after we have discarded supernaturalism as it was before. Nay, the consciousness of the need for forgiveness from one's fellow-men becomes intensified. It becomes exalted into a higher degree of religious fervour and passion than it ever could have been when the chief anxiety of religion was to appease a supernatural agent. No stronger vindication of a naturalistic faith and practice could be conceived than this heightening of the significance of the forgiveness of sins between man and man.

We have, then, already justified prayer as a form of petition to an outside Being under a naturalistic scheme of human redemption. Nobody ever dreamed of denying that it is perfectly rational to pray in the manner here indicated. Furthermore, it is quite plain that the efficacy of prayer when directed to personal agencies within nature is not merely subjective; it is objective and real. The

answer is dependent upon the asking. Let it further be noted that prayer of this kind is not limited to asking for spiritual blessings. It secures material help as well as outside spiritual safeguards and spiritual reconciliations.

Further, how self-evident it has become that prayer within the limits here under consideration need not be merely mental ; nay, must be spoken as well. Not only speech but the very bodily attitudes of prayer should remain intact. It is fully justifiable to bow the head, to stretch forth the hands, and on occasion to fall upon the knees. Such practices are not only justifiable but are actually carried out by everybody. Who can deny that the use of these towards supernatural agents is simply borrowed from the universal and everyday practice of falling on the knees, stretching forth the hands and bowing the head towards fellow-mortals, when, in great need and dependence, men and women cry out for help, either physical or spiritual ? After analysis of the case, then, instead of conceding that religious petitions to an outside Being for help must cease when supernaturalism is discarded, one rather is astonished at the presumption and audacity, or else the lack of reflection, of those who declare that men must cease to pray in a religious sense when the supernatural is given up.

For, whatever else must be abandoned, certainly petition to outside beings in whose visible presence one stands or kneels, and within range of whose hearing one's words are uttered, will for ever be its own justification. The only change with the decay of supernaturalistic creeds will be that such petition, which before had been counted secular or profane or what not, will rise now into the dignity of religious ceremonial. This asking from a fellow-mortal within earshot for help is the eternal and indestructible nucleus of the substance of prayer.

But it is not the whole range of the practice which naturalism in religion must inculcate. We are by no means limited, in our requests, to persons within earshot. There are countless channels for communicating petitions to those absent or remote. A prayer may be written, it may be printed. Yet not even these direct means of conveying a supplication to the Being implored exhaust the possibilities of reaching the ear and the soul of others. Sometimes it is not necessary that one should pray and direct one's petition to some particular and definite individual. Everybody knows that a petition sent forth vaguely and generally often touches the heart of this or that hearer, quite irrespective of any personal friendship or any individual responsibility towards the needy suppliant. We ask we know not whom in particular, but we get in response from someone in particular. Men and women out of work insert in the daily papers a statement of their predicament; and their prayer is answered. Somebody hearing of a case of distress announces the circumstances in the Press and vouches for the accuracy of his statement; and the money that is wanted comes. The home in the country which the invalid needed is offered. The journey to a warmer clime is provided. Verily, many have found that a Personal God is round about them, ready to hear and help. Experiences so common as these are known to everyone. The only novelty in my argument is that I bring them into relation with the deepest necessities of our lives and open up close at hand an infinite scope for religious trust, faith, and fulfilment.

Sometimes the prayer is directed in no such vague and general manner, but is misdirected. It is addressed to a definite individual, yet one whose heart is hardened or whose eyes are blind or who proves after all incapable of

answering our request. And still the prayer is answered. Some chance onlooker overhears and forthwith assumes the rôle of Providence. It must never be forgotten that prayers may be not only heard but overheard. When not even overheard in the literal sense by one who can answer, they may be reported to somebody else who can.

Nothing could be more naïve in its simplicity than the testimony frequently rendered by evangelical enthusiasts, who boast that in their philanthropic work they have never asked any human being for a penny, and yet the infinite Creator of the universe from on high has heard their prayer to him. Money has poured in from this and that rich man or woman. Such enthusiasts are without doubt sincere. But they and the persons who believe their testimony overlook the fact that there are many forms of prayer besides direct begging. People see for themselves a man's sincerity, single-mindedness, and self-sacrifice, and the need in which both he and his work stand. One who has fainted by the wayside need not tell me that he has fainted and requires my help. If I am but half human, I know before he asks, and answer because he does not ask. So with the self-sacrificing worker among the poor. We see the needs of his mission, and our hearts are forthwith touched to proffer our support. The evangelist who testifies that without natural means the Creator has directly moved the rich to support his mission, must prove that someone who has never heard of it or of its merits has sent money. The truth is that dogmas exacting faith in supernatural agencies make those who implicitly accept them blind to what common sense reveals as plainly as the day—the human agencies and the natural connections binding one human spirit with another.

Petition, however, to one's fellow-mortals is not limited to those actually living. All human agencies who have once constituted a part of the living social organism and whose character and purposes have been preserved to us in books or by tradition are potent factors to-day in the lives of human beings. Literature, in proportion as it is imaginative, poetic and patriotic in its sentiments, teems with illustrations of direct addresses to human beings long since dead. These addresses consist not only of praise and expressions of gratitude but of appeals and petitions. If our reasoning thus far has been correct, such petitions do not cease to be prayers simply because they are not addressed to superhuman agents. Upon close analysis we shall, I believe, be forced to confess that they are answered, and not simply subjectively. Take Wordsworth's sonnet, beginning :

> Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour :
> England hath need of thee : she is a fen
> Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
> Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
> Have forfeited their ancient English dower
> Of inward happiness.

The Milton living in history and not simply the Milton already subjectively a part of Wordsworth does through the supplication become a more intense, vivid, and potent reality to the petitioner because of his prayer. Milton is one of "the choir invisible," living "in minds made better by their presence," but in other minds as well as that of the petitioner. But more than this, Milton is living in his poems and his prose and in the historical record of his times. No one focussing attention upon Milton, and reconsidering his works and his life, can fail to derive from them new strength and inspiration. It is impossible to say that one studying the works of

Shakespeare is benefited only subjectively. It is impossible to say that anyone indebted to Shakespeare's liberating and humanising spirit can turn the attention fresh upon him and not derive from him new, real and objective inspiration. So with Milton. In opening our minds to him, he becomes more vividly present to us; and thus he makes us better and quickens us to new heroism and new dignity. It is only by prayer to him that more of him enters into us than mere chance allowed. Surely it is a petty and mechanical logic which would lead us to believe that the 230 years between us and Milton are in any way a barrier to his response to our spiritual appeal to him! Time is no barrier. Pathetic is the foolishness of those who, in order to interpret the inspiration which we may derive, feel forced to presuppose that the spirit of Milton is actually present in the sense in which living men are at hand. It is to be hoped that most of us are poets enough, without any spiritistic theory to encourage us and without any materialistic doctrine to prevent, to cry out to Milton, under pressure of our inward shame and conscious of his character:

> We are selfish men;
> Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
> And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power!
> Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

When the Litany of the Church of England becomes —and it will so become—the native poetic outgrowth of English history and of English character and of English genius, as well as the outgrowth of the religious services

of ancient Jerusalem and of the Romish Church, this supplication to Milton will find its place in our Morning and Evening Prayer. The disciplinary efficacy of the repetition of it would in no wise require, as a presupposition, in the faith of the suppliants any doctrine or dogma as to supernatural powers or as to the self-conscious living presence of Milton to-day. To the truly historic imagination the past is verily present, not only as the unconscious energising principle of our lives but also in proportion to our accurate and devout contact with the literature and record of its meaning and its lessons.

In a naturalistic view of religion all such appeals as this of Wordsworth to Milton would be recognised as essentially and intensely religious ; and such recognition would enhance their beauty, dignity and influence.

Not only, however, will treasures of so-called secular literature be seen to be sacred and be appropriated by the Church. The best prayers of the Church itself, which hitherto have been interpreted in a supernaturalistic sense, will not on that account be discarded.

Generally in our day nobody prays to Jesus Christ, unless he accepts the idea that Jesus Christ has continued since his death to be a living, self-conscious spirit and is to-day operating upon human society and co-operating with his disciples to the end of its redemption. But the time will come when persons who in no wise entertain this idea, will not be in the least ashamed to turn, as much as any spiritistic Christian, to Jesus Christ for help and inspiration, for strength and consolation, just as they will repeat Wordsworth's prayer to Milton. To-day it may seem almost preposterous that such a time will come. But how can the discarding of supernaturalism separate us from Jesus the Man, from Jesus the Christ, from him who exemplified in his sayings and in his life the principle

of our humanity to a degree far transcending that of any other character preserved to us in literature and tradition? We need Jesus as we need Milton; and the only way to get him is to turn towards him as we would to Milton—to study his life, picture it, visualise it, know by heart his sayings and his influence, and thus focus our attention upon his unique personality. To do so mentally will be to cry out mentally, "Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us!" and what we shall say in our inmost soul that we may utter with the lips. Thousands who to-day discard the supernatural office assigned to Jesus are ready to testify to the inspiration of his life. It is inconceivable that a religion which will turn to the examples of all good men should omit that of Jesus. Nor will any deficiency of historical evidence as to the actuality of the details of his life have a weakening effect upon the power of his personality any more than the same deficiency would have in the case of any other man. In the case of all men the valuable element in their lives depends not so much upon the authenticity of every incident as upon the ideal character which the incidents somehow inevitably suggest or inevitably create through our constructive imagination in our own minds. The true triumph of Christ will be the survival of his power for good over men after they have totally discarded all belief that he was unique in origin or in kind or even that he actually did or said any one of the things which have been assigned to him. Somebody, something, many persons or many things, did, somehow, suggest to the writers of the New Testament that ideal of manhood which therein is shadowed forth. Whatever suggested the ideal there depicted is, in the ultimate analysis, the living reality from which the ideal issued. Though the whole narrative of the Gospels be proved to be mythical, the reality it

presents cannot from the ethical and sociological point of view be denied. The myth somehow grew out of living needs and living experiences. Destructive critics will have difficulty in destroying the ideal suggested by the story of the life of Christ. Nor can they destroy the belief that it emanated from living experience of some kind. It, moreover, is in no wise dependent upon the authenticity of the narrative. It is its own witness and its own justification. It will, accordingly, grow more and more to be a positive redemptive energy throughout mankind, in proportion as all spiritism falls away from religion. Naturalistic religion will not only rescue the characters of secular literature but will deliver Jesus out of the hands of those who in their jealous adoration of him have made him a preternatural—and therefore a monstrous—being.

Even now we have not exhausted the range through which the spirit of prayer may sweep without passing beyond its legitimate confines. Equally justifiable with petition to living human beings and to the great characters of the past is direct address in the second person to the great tendencies and institutions of human society. The very tissues of the living organism of humanity are sensitive and vibrate in response to our supplications. The ideal relations and standards of human fellowship glow with new life and move responsive to the petitioner's importunity. Such abstractions as England, Democracy, the Spirit of Man, Womanhood, the Moral Ideal ; such virtues as Purity, Equality, Fraternity—these are no *mere* abstractions. Although abstractions, they are energies, potencies round about us. To turn the mind towards them, to fix the eye of the spirit upon them, is to cause them to pass from vagueness and indefinite passivity into distinct and precise activity. We cannot mention their

names without beginning to grow into their likeness. As ideas, as principles formative and directive in human society, they have a real existence independent of any one individual who may or may not revere them. Take Emerson's immortal prayer: "I love the Right; Truth is beautiful within and without forevermore; Virtue, I am thine; save me; use me; thee will I serve, day and night, in great, in small, that I may be not virtuous, but Virtue." Let any man pray this prayer, and he will see that from Virtue as a real power, from the idea and from the living principle of it in human experience, strength will issue to transform him into its image and into identity with it. The result of experiment with this prayer will be the conviction that even petitions to personal agents, supernatural or natural, are efficacious only in so far as they involve, though but implicitly, an appeal to the abstract qualities of ideal manhood. The suppliant will find that William Blake expresses the inmost truth of prayer when he says:

> To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
> All pray in their distress,
> And to these virtues of delight
> Return their thankfulness.

Consider the psychic effects of singing, especially in public meetings, Edward Carpenter's hymn: "England, arise! the long, long night is over." They will be seen to be more than subjective. The England round about us and the England of the past will grow clearer before our eyes and dearer to our hearts. Abolish the England that is outside of us, convince the singer that no great reality is there, that England is but a figment of his fancy, and the whole power of the hymn and of the singing of it will vanish. It is literally true that in

uttering the petition, the real England closes round about and in upon the imagination of the petitioner, communicating to him her own character. England, as a historic spiritual organism, pours her energy into those of her members who long to serve her. The mind of the petitioner, by the petition, opens itself to hitherto undiscerned realities which henceforth shed unintercepted influence.

If such be the intimate and vital relationship between us and the whole of human society past and present, it cannot be said that there only remains to us a sort of idealistic communion with the great and good, and with those groups which have been the inspiration of the great and good. Besides such union and communion, direct petition is also possible. This being the case, those religious innovators who have discarded supernaturalism and have on that account felt themselves compelled to discard petition, have erred in judgment.

Typical among such innovators was Dr Congreve. He retained the word "prayer." But unhappily he went out of his way to assert that from Positivistic prayer all idea of direct petition is excluded. Why should he have excluded petition? Surely only because he had failed to analyse carefully the factors which remained within Positivism. The supreme being to which the Positivists pray, Humanity, is verily present wherever any human beings are present, and hears whenever they hear. To each individual in the congregation all the others are an outside living reality which may and does respond to petitions. But over and above this, did Dr Congreve even understand the prayers he himself formulated? Was he not still so dominated by the supernaturalistic presuppositions to which in youth he had been trained, that by oversight he failed to recognise

the most virile and effectual characteristics of Positivistic prayer? Dr Congreve's error seems also to have fastened itself upon the understanding of another devout and unflagging disciple of Comte. Mr Malcolm Quin, who conducts the services in the Church of Humanity at Newcastle-on-Tyne, divides the forms used by him under three headings only, Commemoration, Communion and Dedication. He allows no place for direct petition. This would exclude the asking that justice be done, that health, wealth, leisure and knowledge be granted to all those from whom these necessities are now wrongfully withheld. No wonder that the poor and women in general have not been attracted in large numbers to the Church of Humanity! It has fallen into commemoration. It has dropped into quietistic piety and receptivity. It has inculcated dedication of one's powers instead of self-assertion and the demand that forthwith those who can deliver shall arise and redeem.

Yet, fortunately, both Dr Congreve and Mr Malcolm Quin have builded better than they thought and professed. In spite of their conscious theory, they have not omitted petition from Positivist prayers. I find in their printed religious services, it is true, no asking for material help. But their prayers are far more than mere aspiration of the individual soul, unrelated to the reservoir of spiritual life round about. There is in the Positivistic prayers very much of direct petition for spiritual help from an outside Being; or, to be more precise, from that portion of the whole being of Humanity which is outside of the petitioner himself. What, for instance, are these invocations of Humanity in Mr Quin's ritual but a direct petition, and what could be more consonant with the real character of Positive polity than such appeals as these: "Humanity, Spirit of Love, arise in the souls of thy servants"; "Yea,

free us from this darkness, that we may behold thee in the glory of thy past" ; "O power of present guidance, unveil thy grace to us and be near to us in these depths" ; "O life that wast, O life that reignest now, reveal to us all the majesty of thy life to be." Surely here is a petition on the part of the individual worshipper to some power outside of his own actualised selfhood. Or take Dr Congreve's form for the Sacrament of Presentation of Children. There you will find this petition, clearly directed to all humanity as well as to the intelligent heart and will of the parents who dedicate their child : "Great power whom we adore as the source of all good to men, Humanity, we thy servants, met for the consecration of a new life to thy service, humbly and earnestly pray that the child by this sacrament presented and consecrated may be lovingly, faithfully, and wisely trained, that under all wholesome influences of affection and submission and reverence she (or he) may grow up to be in her turn rich in such influences, taking her part in thy continuous work."

Thus even those who intend to omit petition, spontaneously and wisely retain it. The ultimate substance of prayer is the act of opening the soul towards the moral universe beyond oneself. It is a drawing back of the curtain to let in the sunlight. Or—to change the metaphor—the human spirit, too long shut within the prison-house of the senses and bound to the claims of the pettier self, is cramped and stifled. It was born for liberty and loving sacrifice ; and when it fears that it can no longer breathe, it strikes against its prison windows, and, breaking them, lets the life-giving air from beyond rush in.

From what we have said above, the minor question as to whether prayer shall be purely mental or may also be

expressed in words is easily settled. Prayer is, of course, in the first place, mental. But it is a grievous blunder to imagine that it has no need to be formulated in words and uttered in speech. No mental activity can become definite, coherent and systematic and remain so, except it be embodied and repeated in words. Afterwards we may come to say the words in a suppressed whisper or only mentally ; but originally and essentially a prayer to be definite must be formulated in language. And it must be actually spoken again and again, or it will waste away into vacancy of soul. A petition that does not or cannot or will not formulate itself in words and let the lips move to shape them and the voice to sound them and the eye to visualise them on the written or printed page, becomes soon a mere torpor of the mind or a meaningless movement of blind unrest or a trick of pretending to pray. Perfected prayer is always spoken.

Moreover, in its fullness a prayer uttered by the private soul alone cannot be adequate to its own fulfilment. One may not say that the prayer in solitude is ineffectual ; for indirectly, if not directly, through its effects upon him who prays, it will reach not only the humanity stored up to us in literature and tradition, but the actual living men and women constituting the present-day community. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that prayer in its fullness is not only spoken but is social. It requires for its completeness the presence of two or three uniting together in petition. Ultimately, prayer is the surrender of the individual's private whims to the general will of society ; and that general will is most powerfully present and effective when at least a few are visibly together in community of purpose. Again, the very fact that the prayer is entered into by several persons proves that it is

already a movement not only of the individual towards the spiritual organism, but of the spiritual organism towards each of its members. It is the insane heresy of religious individualism which has regarded private as deeper and intenser than public prayer. According to this heresy, the height of prayer is for the individual to be alone with the Alone—as jealous theists describe it. The truth, however, of our spiritual life is that in order to ascend spiritually we must meet and help one another up. Social prayer is the coming together in order to enter into the unifying spirit of all society. Articulate utterance is manifestly the only means for rational communion, and the words uttered, in order to express the turning of the mind to the redemptive influences within the spiritual organism of society, must consist not only of statements in the third person concerning those influences, but of address. It is not enough that we speak *about* the Being whose help we crave ; we must speak *to* it. It is quite true that, when we cease to trust to personal agencies outside of society, we can no longer address them either in thought or words ; but this is no reason why we should cease speaking to the personal agencies within society. We may henceforward only talk about supernatural beings ; but surely we are not restricted to talking about our fellow-mortals. We must address them directly.

We dare never forget that moral realities stand to us in a different dynamic relation from the grass and the stars and the sea. No effects upon us or upon these would result from petitions even of a most righteous man to them. But no one can deny that prayers to Purity, Serenity, Faith, Humanity, England, Man, Woman, to Milton, to Jesus, do create a new moral heaven and a new earth for him who thirsts after righteousness.

It may well be conceded that only when a man's emotions are profoundly stirred and his imagination quickened, can he feel the significance and dignity of addressing a petition to such abstract qualities and comprehensive realities as I have been considering. The moral will, although it does go out in supplication to these so-called abstractions and generalisations, never does so when a man is neutral and apathetic. But when in such a state of mind, why should any man trouble to address either natural or supernatural powers? The prayers I have been advocating presuppose exalted states of mind in which principles, ideas and the main tendencies and goals of human effort are felt to be supreme realities and constitute a living presence. The mood of all prayer, supernaturalistic no less than naturalistic, if it be genuine, is akin to the spirit of poetry, wherein the invisible, the universal, the ideal, is felt to be more real than one's own body. It is nothing against the interpretation of prayer which I have given, that it presupposes imagination and a state of profound emotion. The prayer that is prosaic and creeps along the ground of literal fact is a contradiction in terms. Let persons who are not deeply moved, and whose spirit is not aflame, speak only in the third person or not at all. The exaltation of prayer which has always characterised it in supernatural religion, will be equally required when the redemptive influences to which we turn are wholly within social experience. The emotion must be high; then the speech will correspond. A spoken prayer must give expression to the exalted emotion that inspired it by majesty of style, by sweep of rhythm and greatness of imagery, or else by the closeness and simplicity of its truth.

Some of the Positivist innovators in religion to whom I have before referred attempted to write prayers in an

unimaginative mood of cold, logical effort. They supposed that a mere recognition of their right to address Humanity would enable them to produce a prayer. They did not realise that only at the white heat of passion and by creative imagination would come forth a form of petition able to stir moral passion in others. The result of their efforts was sometimes grotesque enough. What they did has cast discredit upon the notion of humanistic prayers. Yet in humanistic religion a foolish and incapable utterance no more proves the inability of humanism to inspire sublime and stirring expression than would a similarly dull utterance in supernaturalistic religion be a disproof of its possibilities. An analysis of certain prayers which have been offered to the public and are used by English Positivists simply shows that the special writers were not poets; it does not show that Positivism is in itself prosaic. Dr Congreve was not a poet. If he failed to write impressive prayers, his failure is no proof that another might not succeed in a similar effort. It is true that he was not without sublime feelings and a wide vision; but he lacked the power of imaginative expression. Take his Collect for the Family. The sentiments and ideas embodied in it are commendable, nor are they lacking in dignity and simplicity; but, being unimaginatively expressed, they should not have been cast into a form of direct petition to Humanity. Direct address is only suitable where a Wordsworth, a Milton or a Shakespeare communicates to it his own power of visualising the universal.

Dr Congreve's unfortunate Collect for the Family reads thus :—"Reverently and gratefully we adore Thee, Humanity, mother of us all, for Thy earliest, most enduring, most beneficent creation of a being like Thyself, the Family, the closest and most intense of human

unions, the first step towards Thy own complete manifestation. Through all the ages of Thy life, through all the partial forms of Thy existence, Thou hast, with instinctive wisdom, been forming this image of Thyself to a more perfect discharge of its office as the primary element of our social being, bending it by submission to a purer and truer usefulness. And in these later times of Thy conscious rule, Thou wilt mould it more and more after Thy own likeness, giving it Thy own threefold existence, blending in concert the three elements of the Past, the Future, and the Present. In its least perfect form the source of unnumbered blessings, in its more perfect form this simplest collective being will increase and give stability to those blessings; it will become the surer foundation of the higher kindred existences, in which it finds its natural completion and safeguards; it will lead us to the Country and to Thyself, the universal Family. To Thee be all honour and glory for so great a gift. *Amen.*" Was anything more screamingly funny ever printed? Our sense of the unconscious humour of this collect is, however, in no wise due to any lack of appreciation on our part of the institution of the family. The grotesqueness is exclusively to be traced to unimaginativeness decking itself in the plumage of poetry. Let the Positivists wait for a Shelley or a Browning or a George Eliot before they begin to offer up prayers to Humanity.

But they need not wait. Already English literature is abundantly rich in Positivistic prayers, as sublime and quickening in melody and passion as anything in the Hebrew prophets or the Litany of the Church. Let anyone read Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise.* There he will find a whole anthology of prayer suitable for use in the Church of Humanity. Swinburne does not

invoke in very name Humanity as a spiritual organism, but he does what would seem less promising. He breathes forth prayers to the ideal republic. When *Songs before Sunrise* was written, he was aflame with democratic enthusiasm, and his soul burnt itself in sacrifice at the altar of republicanism. Yet not a line nor a word of his could anyone find grotesque. Our conclusion, then, as regards the prayers of naturalism, is that they are in no other position than those of supernaturalism. They must wait for a poet.

We have noted that a petition addressed to a Being need not differ in content from a simple statement of fact. Take the General Confession in Morning and Evening Prayer. It is a petition to God; it says, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." If we drop the pronoun "Thy" and in its place put words descriptive of what the "Thy" undoubtedly indicates, we shall have destroyed the form of prayer, but the matter of the sentence will remain wholly intact: "We have erred and strayed from the right ways like lost sheep." How little difference, whether we speak to Righteousness or speak about it! We see that the difference between the third and the second person is not a difference in truth or in kind but only in warmth. The form of prayer marks an intensification of intimacy, but nothing more. We cannot even say that statements about a thing fail to draw it nearer to us. When we declare that we have erred and strayed from the right ways like lost sheep, the right ways become less far off. And they loom higher and grander before our inward vision. They awaken an impulse to start forward and enter into them. Only to speak about Virtue is in fact a supplication. It is an asking without the form of

asking; and beyond all doubt such formless prayers are answered.

When speaking of the form of prayer, we found that it might be addressed to a person or persons within earshot or to those living but absent. Or we might ask of the community as a whole or of persons and tendencies remote in history, or of ideals and abstractions. Now exactly in the same way, although in a lesser degree, to make a statement in the presence and hearing of a person, although with no form of petition, may virtually be a petition. If I come pale and haggard into the presence of someone capable of assisting me and simply declare, "I have had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours and am penniless," the effect is probably quite the same as if I added, "Give me something to eat," or "Give me something with which to buy food." The efficacy of the statement is of the same kind when the words touch the heart of an absent person whom they indirectly reach. Likewise even the influence of the dead and of abstractions may be secured to our benefit. Almost all the effect of Wordsworth's sonnet addressed to Milton would have been obtained had it been a statement about him instead of an appeal to him.

Persons, then, who boast that they have discarded prayer and who regard it as childish or fantastic to address petitions to beings who cannot literally hear, do not escape the charge that their minds virtually go out to meet the great realities of the moral universe, whenever they make sincere and truthful statements about virtues or great historic tendencies. They may say that they have abandoned the form of prayer, but they cannot maintain that they have dropped its substance. Modern indifference and the lack of analysis have led to a widespread discarding of the form of prayer, but we have no

reason to think that persons have in any degree ceased talking about virtue or ceased going out to meet it half-way. Nor in fact have they, in abandoning prayer to supernatural agencies, fallen off from the poetic habit of using the form of prayer to the dominant factors in moral experience. They have not yet become accustomed to denominate such addresses prayers; but when once the identity, in disposition and efficacy, of petitions to human agents with prayers to superhuman beings is seen, the form of petition will not only be used but will be designated by the religious name for it.

Thus we see that the form of prayer is legitimate, whenever the sense of intimacy with the object from which blessing is derived rises beyond the everyday level of emotion. We might say that a statement *about* virtue represents the positive degree of moral emotion, while an address *to* virtue represents the comparative degree. The latter indicates more perturbation of the heart; there is a bursting of the ordinary bounds and channels of feeling; the emotions overflow and rush forth in unwonted abundance and with increased momentum towards the object they seek.

There is, however, a superlative degree of moral sentiment. The sense of intimacy with virtue may rise to a level where it transcends even the form of prayer. The plane of feeling where excitement, unrest and yearning dominate is not the highest. Such a state is often transcended. The soul enters into a realm of spiritual clarity, of calm and radiant fulfilment, where it no longer is aware of any separation between itself and the whole of virtue which it craved. In this state of emotion it becomes as impossible to speak *to* the influences and agencies which redeem as of them. The intimacy of the

Good in the individual with the Good beyond it has become for the instant identity of being. In such moments of lucidity one neither speaks *of* virtue and the good in the world nor *to* virtue and the good in the world, but lets virtue and the good in the world speak for themselves in and through one's own soul. Thus it was with the ancient Hebrew prophets. They identified God with themselves and spoke in his person. Such, likewise, was the sense of mystic union with God expressed time and again by the Founder of Christianity. He saw himself to be one with the Powers that redeem. The highest state of religious emotion is this, which can only express itself adequately in the first person. And the line of religious development in the future under naturalism will not be marked by a falling short in that emotion which needs the form of prayer, but by a transcending of it.

Not only in Hebrew and Christian literature do we find this higher form in which petition is transcended, but also in the sacred writings of the East. It is likewise to be found in such mystic poets of the West as Emerson and Tennyson. Emerson, without explaining who it is that speaks, uses the first person, where it is quite evident that his own finite personality is not the speaker. In the following verse he uses it as an Eastern seer would :—

> They reckon ill who leave me out ;
> When me they fly, I am the wings ;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

In "The Higher Pantheism," Tennyson, although he does not use the first person, expresses exquisitely that consciousness of identity with all reality and

with the ideal of all good of which we have been speaking :—

> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see ;
> But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He ?

If in the future the form of prayer is to be less used than it has been in the past, it will not be because we shall fall back in coldness and apathy to the third person, but because we shall more frequently rise like the great mystics in their rarer moments, to identity with the real and with the good. In its fullness communion with the redemptive powers is such that he who prays is one with that to which he prays.

It is, however, an error to imagine that address to God and address by him are the only religious forms of speech. In our recognition of the ecstasies which break out into petition and praise and into utterances as from God himself to man, we must not forget that plain, quiet statements of moral experience and of moral judgment serve the same high ends. Mere assertions of our wants, acknowledgments of our limitations, confessions of our debts and hopes, ought to make up the main body of religious utterance. Simple, unimaginative expressions of principles and needs strengthen those principles and meet those needs in ourselves and others. The more sober thinkers of our day have therefore sometimes discarded the form of prayer, only because they were more sensitive and discriminating ; they were anxious to avoid the slightest exaggeration. They have disciplined themselves to modest declaration of moral experience. They have preferred to understate in order to escape the vice, to which professional religionists are prone, of

overstating the intensity of spiritual desire and hope. They see that religion in the past has often fallen into contempt because of indulgence in the comparative and superlative degrees in speech, when only the positive degree of emotion was felt. It is consonant with the character of true religious feeling to check hysterical talk by restraint of the tongue.

Commendable is the self-control which can feel and will greatly and yet keep temperate in phrase. In nearly all the prayers of the Book of Common Prayer there is an almost imperceptible merging of plain statement, of petition, and of oracular utterance into one another. In the greatest prayers are most frequently to be found plain statements of facts of the moral life. For instance, in the prayer from which we have already quoted the sentence "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep," there immediately comes the declaration, "We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts." After the clause "We have offended against Thy holy laws" is the plain statement, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." Here there is no form of address or petition, but the spirit of prayer is incarnate.

Such merely positive declarations may at any moment mount emotionally and assume the overt form of petition; then, subsiding to a lower level of feeling, they resume the third person. The form is as nothing if the substance be present. To state, "We ask to be forgiven," is not a prayer in form; yet its import is the same as if we had said "Forgive us!"

In the meetings of ethical societies are often read declarations of principles which make no pretence to

form, imaginativeness, or dignity of style. They do not rise above the positive degree of emotion, but—not presuming to—are in taste. They are honest, homely confessions of moral purposes, aspirations, and duties. Yet no one could hear them read and not be aware that they in their degree appeal to the humanity of every listener and set him turning towards all good. They stir in him both a sense of responsibility and a consciousness of his own need. Such a plain, matter-of-fact statement is this :—

> We are here to-day to deepen our sense of personal responsibility towards those who may need our ministering care. We dedicate our lives to all with whom we are joined by the ties of duty and by opportunities of service ; to our neighbours, to kindred, to the children who are dear to us, to fellow-citizens, to our countrymen and to anyone we may help—even to those as yet unborn.
>
> It is a terrible thought that beings frail, without experience and yet precious, are thrust into a world oftentimes thoughtless, selfish, and cruel. We would offer our lives as a shield to guard the wayward from their own folly and to protect the innocent and ignorant from pernicious customs and the designs of evil persons. We would summon all men and women now living to the high office of benignant Providence, to which their position as fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, as elder brothers and sisters, as neighbours and citizens and as fellow-mortals, calls them. We commend to the fortunate, to the powerful, to those of pre-eminent ability or in positions of influence, to the governors of our cities and of the nation, all children whose parents are worldly or destitute, illiterate, intemperate, or over-

worked. To those who might bring relief we cry out: "Have mercy upon these helpless victims, and deliver them out of their untoward conditions; create for them a new environment, both physical and social; preserve their bodies from hunger, pain, and disease; and to their minds bring the truths that reveal the glories of the universe, bestow upon them the beauty that graces life and pour out the love that hallows it."

Above all, we plead that henceforth no human life shall come into existence unless it has been desired, and will be welcomed, cherished, and revered.

Here is a petition to one's fellow-mortals without the form of appeal. It does not pretend to emanate from a mood of unwonted intensity and so need not attempt to rise above the level of workaday phrase.

As an instance of the natural transition from statements in the third person to direct petitions and then back again, I may cite another confession of moral need, used in the services of some ethical churches :—

To everyone who might influence us for good or evil we send forth the time-honoured petition, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We cry out to those about us, appealing to the best that is in them: "Help us to do through hours of blindness what in moments of insight we see to be right. Bring home to our unwilling thoughts the truth that the triumph of righteousness on earth depends in part on our own effort and our own wisdom. Infuse into us this day the strength to resist evil and to do good; make us just and kind in all our dealings. Deepen in us the desire to love, know, and do the right. Save us from hasty opinions, words, and deeds. Teach us to consider

what we are prone to forget—the cause of the unfortunate, the stranger, of the aged, of children, and of dumb animals. Help us to root out from ourselves race hatred, class prejudice, and religious intolerance, as well as all other forms of cruelty and malice. Encourage us to make the common weal our end. Lead us to cherish truth and beauty and all institutions which make life noble. Lastly and once more, we ask: Increase our power to live every day of our lives in the spirit of this appeal."

A statement which never once rises out of the third person and above the positive degree sometimes reaches the heart for which it is meant, as potently as would a direct petition. I cite two more ethical declarations which I have found from experience are not without the efficacy of prayer :—

The miseries and wrongs which degrade our nation require no miracle to end them; but only a good heart and willing wit on the part of the intelligent, the prosperous, the electors, the legislators, and the magistrates of our land; and, on the part of the disinherited classes, a burning sense of the wrongs they suffer. We add ess ourselves not to beings who are blind, deaf, remote, or incapable of rendering aid, nor to an invisible deliverer beyond the skies. We importune men—fellow-men, close at hand—of like nature and in like need with ourselves; for we know that importunity like ours overcomes both the heedlessness of the proud and the apathy of the oppressed.

We call upon men and women of all classes, but we especially summon the poor and overworked, to form themselves into a mighty religious movement, for the teaching and doing of the duties of man to man by

man. If we who are pledged to social regeneration become an organised multitude, the wrongs of life will be quickly righted, for we ourselves shall have the power to establish justice in the land.

We utter this summons in the glad consciousness that in doing so we are performing a part, necessary though humble, in the great work of human redemption.

Likewise this :—

In the name of duty and humanity ; for the sake of the tens of thousands of the suffering poor, for the unemployed, the overworked, the underfed ; on behalf of those who have no room to live, and who must die without the sanctities of home ; for all who dwell in uncertainty from week to week as to their means of subsistence ; for the wives of the needy—especially in time of childbirth ; for the children of the poor and of worldly and dissolute parents ; in pity for all women whom neglect and want drive into vice ; and for the many men and women whom poverty and evil associations tempt into lying, drunkenness, theft and murder ; we call upon all to set aside their vanities, to rise above greed of class and prejudice of birth, and, in the spirit of wisdom and love, with energy and singleness of mind, to look these terrible evils in the face, to trace their causes, and to apply their cure.

The result of our analysis is that the discarding of supernaturalism does not involve the discarding of the form of prayer and does not deprive us of its immeasurable benefits—inward, social, and even material. Accordingly, as regards Christian prayer, the question for religious reformers is not so much one of revising as of re-interpreting. Hereafter when we pray, if we use the

old words, we must recall definitely to mind what factors in moral experience are involved. When we remember our own denotation of the terms used, the form in which the thought is cast assumes a fresh and deeper meaning. Indeed, the supreme need of our day is not so much revision of statements as a rethinking of the realities to which the statements refer. Re-interpretation of terms has always been the chief method of progress in thought. A study of the evolution of religion exposes to view not so much a restatement of old truths as an attachment of new insight to the old words. The discovery of new religious truth has not been a discovery of another universe; it has been only a better understanding of the same, a fresh insight into the relations of the factors which were always there, but veiled.

Accordingly it is as it should be, that throughout the ages the words used have not changed even where there has been a complete revolution of the understanding of the realities to which they pointed. Nor has the retention of the old words ever produced any confusion or misunderstanding. Indeed, to have introduced new terms, when one had only gained new light on an old factor, would have produced chaos and confusion.

Let us not forget that the sun used to be thought of in a manner totally different from that in which we to-day perceive it and conceive it. To us it is an enormous sphere of light and heat, moving at a certain pace, possessing certain chemical properties and so on. Such, of course, was always its reality. But our truth about it is new and scarcely has a point in common with the primitive conception of it. Yet with the new interpretation we have not discarded the word sun. We have continued its use, and we read the new truths into the old term. Old words are never old wineskins. Our

justification for pouring new meanings into the word sun is that the reality for which the term stood is still the same reality that it was when savages first named it. So with the stars. They are not to us what they were to men of primitive tribes ; but we need not on that account discard the word and invent a new term. I cite the case of the sun and stars as typical of all the factors in the physical universe. Our view of that universe is new, but the words to designate its factors and phenomena are, as they ought to be, the same old words. If we turn from the physical universe to the human world, we find the same law : the growth of new ideas and the retention of old words with changes of meaning corresponding to that growth. Woman, in the twentieth century after Christ, is beginning to be looked upon as a being essentially different in nature and powers, rights and privileges, from what she has hitherto been understood to be. Yet it were the merest folly on account of any such evolution and revolution of our understanding of her to drop the term "woman" and invent a new sign in speech to stand for our new conception of her. Likewise with the word "child." Children, like women and like the physical universe, are newly revealed to our understanding ; but there is no occasion for not calling them children. No embarrassment or misunderstanding will arise.

The same situation holds concerning religious terminology and the new conceptions of the factors in our deeper moral experience. When we discard supernaturalism, we do not discard any of those elements of fact in experience which were the occasion that induced our primitive ancestors to adopt a supernaturalistic interpretation of the inner moral life. If we follow the analogy of the evolution of language in all other departments of ex-

perience we shall retain the word God and all the rest of the nomenclature of religion, to denote the factors in our present experience which perform the same functions designated under the supernaturalistic terminology.

Take the word "prayer." It must remain, to indicate a specific relation of thought and speech towards certain factors in the moral universe outside the individual mind. To say that a man has ceased to pray simply because he now sees that the objects to which he has been praying are within human society, would be like saying that a man has ceased to travel from London to Brighton when he has learned the civic constitution of each, their geography and history. Brighton is Brighton, despite the increase in our knowledge of it. So is God still God. And that active relationship of the human will to him which has always been called prayer must continue to be so named. Prayer may be found to be utterly different from what many conceived it to be, but it is not on that account any the less prayer.

As the personification of certain factors in moral experience is involved in the very form of naturalistic prayer, it may be well to call attention to what personification is.

We personify when we attribute in speech the qualities of personal agencies to factors which we do not believe to be self-conscious. Now, the question that arises is this: Is personification an exaggeration? Do we feel less intimate spiritually with impersonal than with personal beings? Towards that which cannot consciously love us do we in fact feel a less absolute and glad sense of inward union than we experience with conscious beings? If we do, then to personify is to exaggerate the facts. If we do not, personification is legitimate, expedient, and truly poetic. If I feel nearer to England than I have ever

felt towards any individual living person, if I have found more peace in the thought of her, more inspiration in her history, and have been more ready to die for her than for any one human being, then to personify England is still for me to fall short of the truth that is in me. For me to personify England is to come nearer to the reality of my relationship towards her than if I did not, but it is not to reach the full truth. Thus personification becomes a necessity of expression.

If, then, Emerson be filled with the sense of the absolute reality of Virtue, Emerson must personify Virtue. In so doing he will not go beyond the literal truth; he will not even reach it. The mystics have always personified the ethical realities. But, in proportion as their vision was clear, they have never dogmatically or metaphysically or literally attributed personality to the great tendencies of which they find and feel themselves to be an essential part. To do so would have been to lose grip of the facts which inspired the personification.

There is another peculiarity in the language of poetic personification which in the judgment of some renders its use impossible for naturalists in religion. This is the application of the masculine pronoun to the factor which is called God. How can virtue be called "He"? And why "He" instead of "She"? But why either? Why not "It"? The answer is that if "It" be used the personification is lost. We human beings are acquainted with no personal agents that are not either masculine or feminine. Our speech has no pronouns to apply to a personal agent or to a being personified, except those which are either masculine or feminine. Like Mr William Watson, we may all lament that we

> must use a speech so poor
> It narrows the Supreme with sex.

So the fault, if it be a fault, of calling goodness "He" when it is personified, is a fault inherent primarily in the limitations of human experience. But when we personify, we know perfectly well, unless we have lost our reason, that the object personified is neither masculine nor feminine, and has no attributes of sex. It is therefore childish to protest against the use of the masculine pronoun to designate the object we worship.

Or, if there be occasion for protest against calling God "He," it is only because we ought perhaps to use the feminine pronoun.

In speaking of the personification of virtues and of such social groups as England, I have implied that these are impersonal entities. But it is only the poverty of language which makes us divide all things into personal and impersonal and then use the word "personal" as a term of praise and "impersonal" as one of disparagement, as if personal entities were always higher than impersonal. Now, it is true that they are higher than stocks and stones. If speech, however, were quite exact and adequate, and if our analysis and classification were complete, we should include under "personal" all the attributes, functions, structures, and growths which emanate from personal agents. Virtue, love, mercy, pity, are attributes of personality. They are of the nature of mentality; they have no existence apart from persons. Is it not, then, an error of classification and of speech to call these "impersonal"? The word "impersonal" ought to be used to indicate only non-personal entities or the attributes of non-personal entities. Now, my contention is that a quality which inheres exclusively in a personal agent must of its very nature be personal, and therefore should be comprehended under the terms "personal" and "personality." So that, if a man

worships Virtue as his God, it is wholly misleading to declare that he worships something impersonal. The high dignity and value which we ascribe to personal agents must surely cover and embrace all the attributes peculiar to personality. No one, then, who worships the Moral Law or Duty or the Moral Sentiment ought to concede for a moment that his God is an impersonal one. Instantly by so doing he plays into the hands of some wily opponent, who knows that if he can only brand these abstract qualities as "impersonal," he attaches to them the disparagement which that term carries with it.

Instead of an abstract quality like virtue, let us consider for a moment a concrete unity like the historic Christian Church, or England. Is the Christian Church an impersonal thing? It is made up of millions of personal agents, interacting and interdependent. It has no existence apart from these. Its very tissue is personality. Also its form and structure and functions are derived exclusively from the nature of personal agents. The Church is nothing more nor less than an organism consisting of persons. We ought not to say, then, that the Church, or England, is an impersonal entity.

If we are not to be allowed to apply the word "personal" to abstract moral qualities, then, to be quite exact, we ought to call them inter-personal. But we must remember that what is inter-personal cannot be classed as impersonal; for the relationship between persons must be of the nature of personality.

If concrete realities like the Christian Church, or England, cannot be fairly called personal, yet they are more than inter-personal. They are not so much the bond between persons as the comprehensive unities overspanning a plurality of persons. In very fact, we have

no experience of individual personal agencies who do not derive their existence from a social organism into which they were born. It is equally true that there are no social organisms where there are no personal agents. A social organism, then, if it is not to be called personal, might very well be designated super-personal.

Thus, anyone who worships either a concrete social group or an abstract moral quality may justly protest against the charge that his God is impersonal; he may insist that it is either super-personal or inter-personal, or both.

In order to offset the super-subtleties of his enemies, a man is sometimes compelled to cultivate an equally keen dialectic. But having once indicated the inter-personal and super-personal character of Virtue and of organic groups of persons, he may well proceed confidently to declare that *his* God too is personal.

It may further elucidate the factors which an analysis of prayer brings to view, if it be pointed out that the word "spiritual" pre-eminently applies to such realities as Virtue and social groups. No one could for a moment deny that that which is inter-personal and super-personal is spiritual, even if he protested that it was not personal. The University of Cambridge is not, as the idealistic philosophers who live there point out, a material thing; it is a spiritual entity. If then a man worships Virtue or England, his God is undeniably spiritual. But how strange it sounds to follow up such a concession by declaring that it is impersonal! We never associate the word impersonal with the spiritual.

# CHAPTER X

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS IN A HUMANISTIC SENSE

MANY times in the foregoing pages I have used theological terms to indicate factors and relationships in a naturalistic scheme for the moral training of the human race. So entirely do the re-interpretation and revision of the Book of Common Prayer which I advocate depend upon the justifiability and expediency of such a use, that it may not be amiss to examine here, with some degree of thoroughness, the general question of terminology. Without reintroducing arguments set forth incidentally in the preceding chapters, I shall attempt to deal with questions which have not been directly considered.

In the first place, let me point out that what are called theological terms are also the only specifically religious expressions. If we discard them, we deprive ourselves altogether of the language of religious life and practice. Even the word religion itself is a theological term, inasmuch as theology is always a theory which justifies religion. This being the nature of theology, one may fairly say that if the word religion be not a theological term, then there is no such term. Or take the word God. Of all language, there is no expression more essentially of the nature of religion. Yet theology is, as the very word implies, a doctrine of God. If, then, the

word God be not a theological term, theology has no term of its own. The word prayer designates the distinctive act of religion; yet whoever has studied theology knows that theology on that very account is chiefly a theory of prayer. Of course the words religion, God and prayer are first religious and then theological. But this is true of the whole language of theology. It possesses no terms which are not first religious. Its nomenclature is wholly borrowed from religion, which possesses no terms that have not been thus borrowed. Such being the case, it becomes self-evident, as I stated above, that if we discard all theological terms we rob religion of its own language. This result would not seem a calamity to one who had abandoned religion altogether, but one who means to retain it must feel the necessity of retaining its verbal notation. And the fact that that notation is also the language of theology will not for an instant tempt him to discard it—at least, if he has a full grip of the situation. Unhappily there are many persons who have not.

Many imagine that if we retain theological terms we commit ourselves to some existing system or other of theology. But this is a mistake which our foregoing analysis clearly exposes to view. The language was religious before it became theological, and it may return to its original state of innocency. A man may use the words God, prayer, and religion, and recognise them as elements in a possible system of theology, and yet temporarily have suspended judgment as to whether any system so far propounded is or is not true.

But I wish to plead for the retention of religious terminology, not simply to indicate factors and relations in the religious life, but also as elements in a new

system of theology. Many persons who think for themselves have grown to loathe theology and all its works ; and yet they cling to religion. They respect the religious man ; but they turn the cold shoulder upon the professed theologian. They will not listen to him. Religion, they say, is a life, an attitude of mind, a thing of the heart and the will, which is good. But theology, they say, is only theory, and it is the theory of religion which philosophic criticism and scientific research have discredited. So, they urge, let us away with theology in the very name of religion.

Now, in my judgment, this off-hand method of renouncing theology and all its works is suicidal. To discard all theory of religion is to play into the hands of those who are experts in manipulating the emotions and the will, without appealing to human intelligence. There is no more fit victim for the religious demagogue than the person who protests against theology altogether, and yet attempts to be religious and to respect religion in others. What finer subject for the priest who assumes to control other men's souls, than the man who boasts that it is well to have a God, but folly to attempt to have a theory of God ? A religion which bars out all theology is a religion minus theory ; and religion minus theory is religion minus intellect. And that, in turn, is exactly what the enemies of human reason have always commended in the laity.

If any sort of religious discipline is to be preserved, we must set out in search of a new theory the moment we set aside the current systems of dogma. We must analyse religion afresh, and its relations to the rest of life and of experience in general. We must bring also our constructive faculties to bear, for although we may never attain an absolutely rational system, we must hold tenta-

tively as consistent a theory of religion as we can attain, to serve us as a working hypothesis for religious practice. The new theory may contradict every point in the current systems of dogma, and, when applied to life, it may overthrow the rites and ceremonies of existing cults ; but it will be a new theology pitted against the old.

The notion prevalent amongst so-called advanced thinkers, that theology is necessarily based upon authority and opposed to reason, is wholly false. It is certainly conceivable that a tentative theory favourable to religion might be constructed without contradicting or transcending experience, and without violating the method and spirit of science.

Theology, then, is the first theological term which we must retain if any sort of rational religion is to be preserved. We must retain it in the name of reason and science. If we are to have religion, we must have a theory of religion, and to have a theory of religion is to have a theology. Inconceivable is it that persons should refuse, in the name of science, to seek for a theory of God, and yet retain a belief in him.

It is easy to see the consistency of those who, in discarding religion, discard theology ; the one act necessitates the other. When they abandoned the hope of a theory about God, they did so because they had abandoned God. He had become to them nothing. But the reverse process is by no means a necessity. One may discard every known theory of God, yet retain God, and make him the starting-point, the element of fact, from which to construct a new theory. It is evident that we must discriminate between theology and every or any special system of theology. As one may reject the sociology of Comte and Spencer and every other sociologist and yet not abandon sociology as a task and an ideal goal

of scientific effort, so also one may reject the current theologies and cling the more tenaciously to theology as a theory yet incomplete. Making this discrimination, we may say that if theology must go, religion must go ; and that if religion is to stay, theology must stay. If we are to retain a belief in anything which we call God, or which performs the same function in the economy of experience as that performed by what other people call God, it is a primal necessity of critical thought to construct the best possible doctrine of God.

There are some who imagine that a new scientific and rational theory to justify a scientific and rational religion should not be called theology, but should be described as ethics. But an acquaintance with the history of religion shows that no theory of ethics or of the moral life can possibly cover all the facts of the religious life of man. In the first place, there have been hundreds of religions which have not been essentially or even perceptibly ethical. Religions have only gradually become ethical. The best historical judgment also sanctions the statement that morality is by no means essentially religious. The moral experience and the moral judgments of men have developed out of commerce, politics, and other spheres of experience where the religious consciousness scarcely touched at all, or, at most, only incidentally. Only after the moral life and the theory of morals were considerably advanced did they enter into, give colour and dictate the shape to the rites and dogmas of religion. It is altogether uncritical and unscientific, therefore, to set up any theory of morals as a theory of religion. It is almost as unscholarly as it would be to set up religion to account for morality.

We may approach this question of the relation of ethics to theology from another point of view. Ethics

is a theory of right and wrong, of human ends and of standards of human conduct. If one turns to the books which have been written by ethical thinkers one sees that they treat of the questions: what is right, what is wrong, what is the essential characteristic of right conduct as distinct from wrong, what peculiar activities of the human mind are involved in arriving at the distinction between right and wrong, how do men's moral judgments vary with their varying experiences, is there an absolute and universal standard of right? These are the problems which ethics covers. There is another question, however, which ethics never has been made to cover, and nobody who understands the subject-matter has ever yet suggested that it should now be made to cover. That question is, Is the universe favourable or unfavourable to the realisation of our moral ideals? Granting that we have standards of conduct and of character, granting that there be certain ends of human life which we sanction as great and good and worthy of our devotion, what are the chances that we can ever fulfil these standards and attain these ends? This question involves in itself, as is quite plain, the problem of man's moral weakness, incapacity, and perversity. Put in another way the question is: Are men bad? If they are, is it in the nature of things possible that they may become good? If they can become good, what are the instrumentalities by which the cure is to be effected? And even of men whom we call good, are they absolutely good? If not, what is the cause of the deficiency?

This problem of evil in life and therefore in the universe—how is it to be solved? If even good men have a touch of badness in them, how are they to become absolutely good? Here are questions most intimately and vitally connected with ethics; and still, by the con-

sensus of all philosophers, they are outside of ethics proper. They deal not with what is right and wrong and how we come to know what is right and wrong; they deal with the existence of evil, and how we are to put an end to evil and establish a reign of righteousness on earth. The relation of life or the universe to the moral ideal, the degree in which the universe is favourable or adverse—this is not a problem of ethics. Even as I have been stating it, my readers must have realised that it is the question of ethical religion and of the theory of ethical religion. Theology as the theory of religion and of God is quite clearly a theory as to the relation of the universe to human ends and ideals; and the relation of the universe to ethical ideals becomes the specific problem of theology the moment religion has become ethical. Then the question as to the existence of God is whether there be any great power, tendency or being favourable to the actualisation of our standards of duty. Within us has grown up a terrific sense of personal responsibility, an overwhelming feeling that we are under obligations to walk certain paths and to set our eyes on certain goals. But is it possible in this universe with our human nature to fulfil the task that we feel in our inmost heart must be done or we fail and forfeit self-respect?

No one, even of those who reject both theology and religion, can deny that this, philosophically stated, is the import and significance of both. Persons may reject every theory as to the favourableness or unfavourableness of conditions to the realisation of our moral ideals, but then they are face to face with a further problem. They must decide whether they will not only reject the theoretical but also the moral problem before them. Will they drive out of mind, in their daily business and

in the midst of all their aspirations and sufferings, the whole question as to whether it is feasible to lead what they regard to be the right life? If they reject not only the theory as to the relation of the universe to the feasibility of the right life but also the practical problem it involves, they reject not only theology but religion. And if they reject this practical problem of religion, it would seem as if they must somehow suffer in their moral life. They would still retain the distinction between right and wrong; but, granting that there is such a thing as wrong, they would shirk the difficulty of finding means within the universe of overcoming it.

We have now arrived at a point where in the very interests of the good life itself it would seem that we must resort to religion. For the religious life, when once moral judgments have coloured and outlined it, deals almost exclusively with the practical problem of toning up the motive to do right by finding circumstances favourable to morality. Thus we have come out again to the conclusion that theology must stand, if morality as a life is to stand. It would seem that those persons who, in the name of the ethical life, reject every particular system of theology which has prevailed in the past, must do so on account of the beginnings of some counter-theory of religion, which has begun to crystallise itself in their reason. For righteousness' sake they must find some sort of a theory of the relation of the universe to the human ideal. Otherwise it is almost inconceivable that morality as a life could flourish. Therefore I would rescue the term theology from the clutch of those who wish to limit it to their own peculiar theory of religion.

It argues a lack of philosophical knowledge and training to imagine that there is no theology except there be a belief in superhuman agencies. Discard that belief,

and still the universe remains, the moral ideal remains, and the question is to be solved as to the adverseness or favourableness of the universe to the ideal. If one holds, as I do, that the moral ideal is itself a part of the universe and that the idealistic trend in human life is natural, the problem becomes one as to the relation of the whole of the universe to a part of it. And it would seem that one who has discarded the supernaturalistic hypothesis would not only be more keenly interested than before in the problem of theology, but would have a surer basis for the expectation that the problem can be solved. Whether the solution would be more favourable to the right life than were the dogmas which he had rejected is another matter. But no one can deny that in and of itself the quality of being verifiable would be a factor in the new theory favourable to morality. We should know how we stood. We should know how to reckon with the universe ; and this of itself would be an incalculable moral gain. For if there be anything that weakens moral purpose it is the twilight of uncertainty, the moving about in the half dark, not knowing whether or not our efforts may not be arbitrarily or at least incalculably thwarted. To know the worst is always better than not to know certainly. But the only point for which I am contending here is that what we shall come to know about the relation of the universe to the human ideal will be a theology. It will be an enormous stride towards the settling of religious controversies and the clearing up of the problems of religion, when scientifically trained men turn to the problem of the relation of the universe to human ideals and ends, and when so turning they know and they make the public know that they are theologians.

The word theism, like theology, has been monopolised by the supernaturalists. But any doctrine concerning

that factor in experience to which religion points when it speaks of God should be called theism. If a naturalistic theory could explain better the elementary factor to which the word God points and throw more light upon the task which religion sets itself than supernaturalism does, its claim to the word theism would be established. It might be impossible to prove that the real factor was a personal self-conscious agent. But what of that?

The word monotheism has also been unjustifiably monopolised by those who say that God is a personal agent over and above the personal agencies who are living human beings. If we can fix the factor which is pointed to by the word God, and if we find that there is only one such reality, then there is but one God. Our knowledge, systematised, would accordingly be monotheism — the science of the One God. Still greater would be the claim of such a doctrine to the term, if we found that our moral judgment backed the intuition of religious men and declared that there ought to be but one God and that the real factor which is pointed to in positive religions is that which all men ought to worship.

It may be objected that the terms theism and monotheism are exclusively theological, and not at the same time religious, like God and prayer. This stricture I am willing to accept; but I have devoted a few sentences to them in order to lead up to the word atheism, which by derivation is akin to theism and monotheism, and yet is by no means limited to theoretical use or associated with the coolness of temper and the calm love of truth supposed to be characteristic of philosophical discussion. The word atheism has been venom on the tongue, when it darts out like a fang. One cannot deny that it is a religious term, although the religiousness be turned bitter and cruel. It is, moreover, an altogether indis-

pensable word ; in proportion as one loves one's God and is jealous of his honour, one is in need of a term of the utmost contempt and horror, to apply to those who deny or blaspheme or mock him. Men should not stand by and, without crying shame, allow others to insult that Being which is to them most real, to which they owe everything, and which they believe to be the only power that saves men. They must at least utter a word of moral censure. Nor may that word be mild. Under humanity, short of cruelty, indeed for the sake of humanity and with as much cruelty as is needed to be kind to those who reject that which one believes to be their best friend, the term of reproach must be the strongest which language affords. The word atheist has always emanated from such sentiments of moral horror. There is thus nothing the matter with the word itself. It is wise and good. It is needed as an expression of a feeling which is inevitable in proportion as one reveres any reality as God. The only objection to it is that in the past it may have been hurled at the wrong persons. The question is, Who is the atheist and what is atheism ? I answer, not without a touch of the emotion which those always feel whose God has been denied, that the prevalent notion about atheism is altogether erroneous and inhumanly unjust. The root of the error and injustice is the age-long fallacy that a god must be a supernatural personal agency, and that one who trusts to no personal agents except those who are living human beings is an atheist.

The tables ought to be turned. This word of anathema should be hurled, as I think, against those who believe there is no God this side of the outer limits of man and nature. Such deny the good in man and nature to be God. They do not believe in the moral law itself as

divine and yet as immanent in human personality. They insult human nature by a most polluting suspicion. I will not again attempt at this point to argue the respective merits of naturalistic and supernaturalistic religion. I here wish to restrict myself logically to the question of religious terminology. As a matter of language, I assert it to be proper that everybody should brand as an atheist everyone else who denies his God. Only those who have no God or having a God are unfaithful or indifferent to him should never presume to cast this epithet at others. In proportion as a man is filled and chilled with horror by the denial or ridicule of what he counts most sacred, in that proportion he has the right to hurl this term of censure.

I remember once, many years ago, sitting in a public meeting and listening to a political demagogue. He aroused uncontrollable merriment in his audience. Sitting near me was a clergyman, who entered into the rough but innocent fun. Suddenly, however, the demagogue quoted, in a flippant if not ribald manner, some saying of Jesus. Instantly the clergyman's face turned ashen white, and he sat throughout the rest of the meeting as one dead. Now any man, I maintain, to whom anything whatsoever is as sacred as Jesus Christ was to that clergyman, has a God. That man is religious ; and he cannot help shrinking in horror from those who speak lightly of what to him is all-holy. They to him are atheists. And has he not a right to name them so ? It would be a moral impoverishment of speech, were the word atheist to cease to be a term of reproach. It is a word which in the struggle of humanistic religion to establish itself there will be much need for.

Let us now turn to the word religion. It is a very common error to think that there are innumerable defini-

tions of it, and that there exists some peculiar difficulty in finding out just what religion is. During the last twenty years, however, a line of investigation has been pursued assiduously by students in various countries, which is gradually clearing away whatever difficulty existed. So long as people turned simply to the etymology of the word, they got no further than two rival Latin origins ; and even when they attained the primary meanings of these two words, no light was thrown on the problem in hand. Likewise, the attempt to evolve out of certain fundamental principles what religion must be only led to hopeless pedantry and subtlety. During the last score of years, however, empirical psychologists have said : "We will not go back to logic and abstract definition, nor to the origin of the word ; we will go straight to the lives of those men and women who the world over have been conspicuous for the attitudes of will and states of heart and acts and lines of conduct which are called religious. We will compare them and their lives with persons who are indifferent to religion, and then again with those who are conspicuous as being positively irreligious." Now this is a truly scientific method of investigation. What religion is, is not a question of words and is not primarily a question of logic. It is a question as to what lines of conduct, what qualities of heart, what dispositions of the will have struck the minds of observers as being distinctive, and have induced them to designate these qualities, as religious.

During recent years another cause of confusion has also been removed. In trying to find out what religion is, persons are often seeking to discover not what it is, but what it ought to be, what it would be if it were morally perfect. When they have found

that, they have got not a definition, but a standard by which to gauge the moral worth of religious practices. Mistaking this standard for a definition, they generally end by declaring that there is only one religion, and that is their own. But in seeking to know what religion is, we ought to keep clear of the problem of what it should be morally. In seeking a definition of it we must look only for that peculiarity which marks all its varieties and distinguishes it from everything else.

If we keep in mind what we are looking for, we shall avoid another error into which many investigators have fallen. I refer to that which was committed by Mr Herbert Spencer. He argued that if you collect the religious opinions of all men, and then, striking out all differences, retain only those beliefs and practices which are common to all, you get the universal religion. Educationists in England during the last thirty-five years have fallen into a similar blunder. They have thought that they could find the essence of Christianity by dropping out the tenets peculiar to each sect and to the Church, and retaining what they taught in common. This they called undenominational religion, and they sought to make it the bond of union among all Christians. Now the trained psychologist would have known that often a man himself is not conscious of that which is his own peculiar characteristic. Likewise, two persons working together may not themselves be aware of their points of identity. They may be altogether lacking in self-criticism. Their opinions may by no means be an index to what they are. The psychologist might discover it to be the common peculiarity of all persons so far as they are religious, that they focus their attention steadfastly and reverently upon some Being from which they believe that they derive the greatest benefits, and from which they believe that this

focussing of the attention will occasion their deriving still further benefits. Yet it is quite possible that ninety per cent. of the persons whose religious life is scrutinised are totally unaware that they are exercising attention in practising religion. They may never have heard of such a thing. They may not know what the word "attention" means; they may never have observed the mental process, and be quite unacquainted with its peculiarities and its place in the economy of religious discipline. But because a man does not know that he is focussing his attention is not the slightest proof against the assertion that he is. Thus, reverent attention to the source of life's chief blessings may be the distinguishing mark of religion, and yet no religious person be aware of it as such.

As a matter of fact, this is what psychologists have discovered in regard to religion. It is the focussing of men's attention steadfastly and reverently upon some Being from which they believe that they have derived the greatest benefits, in order to derive still further benefits.

This focussing of the attention may be more or less systematised. The more systematised it is, the more highly developed is the religion. This systematisation may consist in an elaboration of thoughts, of disciplines, and of forms and ceremonies.

What makes a form or ceremony religious is that it is an instrumentality for thus focussing the attention steadfastly and reverently. What makes a thought or doctrine or dogma religious is the same. So, too, with any discipline like fasting or prayer. It is religious when it is an aid to what is the essential psychological peculiarity of religion.

The differences in religions never consist in the presence or absence of this peculiarity, but in the degree

to which it is present and in differences as to the object to which attention is steadfastly and reverently turned. It follows inevitably that those who thus look to the sun will be different in their religion from those who turn their attention, in order to receive further benefits, to some domestic animal like the ox or elephant, or to the lightning, or to a fountain of water welling up in the desert, or to nature-demons, or to trees. Religions, however, do not differ merely because the objects attended to are not the same. They are felt by us to vary in worth according to our judgment as to the ethical effects of attending reverently to the objects they set up.

Religions differ also in their rational value. If the object to which attention is turned is a pure figment of the mind, a creation of the fantasy, if it be something which to the scientific judgment does not exist, the religion is an error, and hence a superstition. Religions also vary in general practical value as well as moral and intellectual worth. The object set up for reverent attention may be either one to which it is a waste of time to turn, or one to which it pays to turn. For instance, attention to the stars was not primarily an ethical religion, but for shepherds and nomads in general it paid. By such attention, they came to know the regularities of the heavenly bodies at night, and so learnt when it was safe to move and when discreet to wait where they were.

We have found, then, a strictly scientific definition of what religion is. It covers every case and includes nothing which is not religion. It is true that there are some practices in the least-developed forms of religion which at first sight seem to contradict the qualification that in religion there is a turning of the attention reverently to some Being. The case is cited of savages who get out of patience with the objects they worship,

and beat them, to punish them. But it becomes quite clear that in proportion as human beings beat their gods, in that proportion their religion ceases. If these feelings of contempt became habitual and constant, it is evident that the being so maltreated would cease to be a god. On the whole, the fetish-worshipper respects the Being from which he thinks to derive benefits. He, of all religious persons, pays the respect in order to secure further favours. The respect may be external, but then his whole life lacks inwardness. It is, moreover, only in the most rudimentary stages of religion, *i.e.* when it can scarcely be detected as a religion at all, that we see such deviations from reverence.

The same comment holds good in regard to the qualification of steadfastness. In proportion as a man is not steadfast in his attention to the source of his greatest benefits, he is not religious. He has religious moments or days or seasons only, but these are all marked by the qualities I have specified.

It will be further noticed that I have limited the benefits derived by implying that they are only the greatest. For one would not turn one's attention steadfastly and reverently to the source of benefits which were not highly prized.

A man may err fatally as to what object it is worth while to attend to. The benefits which he derives may prove, in the issue, to be things not worth making life's chief concern. There have been many religions, the object of which was to increase pleasures of special kinds, and the result has been the downfall of the men and the nations who cultivated attention to the means towards such ends. It must have become quite clear, then, that religion is a term which should not be used as if it always stood for a wise mental practice. Religion is not always

beneficent in its effects. Those persons err in judgment who say that any religion is better than none. The simple innocence of no religion is better than the focussing of the attention steadfastly and reverently upon the means towards ends the pursuit of which leads to effeminacy, disease and the extinction of a race. Accordingly it is a regrettable use of current speech which identifies the word religion with what one regards to be the only true and right religion ; for all sorts of illogical inferences are made.

But the chief advantage, for our purpose here, of a sound definition of religion is that it exposes the absurdity of those who declare that religion always has to do with the supernatural and with belief in personal agencies who are not living members of human society. It is perfectly true that many religions have been the focussing of attention steadfastly and reverently upon such agencies. But to say that all religions have to do with the supernatural is mere blindness to the facts of religious life. It must, however, be pointed out that naturalism in a religion is only one characteristic in its favour. Natural beings vary in dignity and worth. It is worse than a waste of time to attend devoutly to some of them. It must also be noted that an object might be conceived of as purely naturalistic and yet be wholly imaginary. One might believe that there was a Mahatma in Thibet and attend to him as a source of spiritual benefits. He might be conceived of as a living human being ; but if he did not exist, religion, so far as it trusted to him, would be worse than futile.

Let us now turn to consider the significance of the word god. May it or may it not justly be used as a term to designate a natural object ? It must be quite clear that in our definition of religion is already involved the definition of the word god. If religion be as I have

defined it, then any object towards which steadfast and reverent attention is turned, in order to derive the greatest blessings, is a god. Any object, natural or supernatural, moral, immoral or non-moral, actual or imaginary, mental or physical, abstract or concrete, powerful or weak, becomes a god the instant steadfast and reverent attention is focussed upon it for the purpose of gaining the supreme blessings.

Our definition immediately exposes to view the fact that a being is not a god by virtue of any inherent quality in itself, but only by virtue of a relationship established towards it by a human being. To bear this fact in mind throws a helpful light upon the use of religious terms in general and the fundamental problems of religion. People ask : What is God ? but they forget or have never realised the import of the question they put. They mean : What is that real being which men ought to focus their steadfast and reverent attention upon in order to derive from it those benefits which are really the greatest blessings to mankind ? They are asking a moral and a scientific question. In its scientific aspect the search is for a real, as distinct from an imaginary, being. They want the true God, for nothing can be more terrible than the suspicion and scepticism that, after all, the being one has been reverently attending to may not exist at all. The question in its moral aspect, assuming that the being is real, inquires whether it actually is the source of the highest good. But all the while it is clear that the word god does not refer to an inherent quality of the object itself, but to the fact or the moral requirement that men turn, or ought to turn, their reverent attention towards it.

Akin to the question, What is God ? is the often-heard inquiry, Is there a God ? Again, light is thrown upon

the nature of this question by substituting for the word god the definition of it. To ask, Is there a God? is to ask whether there be in very fact any Being from whom supreme blessings will be gained if one attends steadfastly and reverently to it.

It will be seen, in pointing out that there are many different beings or supposed beings which people attend to, that there are, as an actual fact of human experience, many gods. It will further be clear, however, that there can be only one true and living God, only one Being whom we could speak of, not simply as a god, or as the god, but as God. God must be the real Being from whom the highest conceivable good is derived if we attend to him. In the light of these explanations, how foolish is the contention of the majority of persons that a god is not a god unless he be a personal agency who is not a human being! If there be a supreme good and that supreme good be attainable by any natural and human means, then that natural and human means surely is the real and all-worthy source of the highest conceivable blessing!

Now, there are those who contend that a naturalistic humanist should altogether drop the word god. Yet these same persons agree that it is absolutely necessary for him to focus his attention reverently and steadfastly upon the natural source from which the greatest benefits of life come. But, in the name of common sense and literary usage, of accuracy and of the need of making oneself understood, I ask them why should we drop the word god, if it is a term which is always applied to anything whenever it is treated in the manner in which these persons concede we ought to treat a certain verifiable source of human blessings? Because some other person's gods are supernatural does not make the

object we attend to any the less a god. One might as well refuse to call one's clothes, clothes, because the garments of beggars are repulsively unclean and torn. Clothes do not simply mean good and expensive clothes; so, gods are not simply those which we approve. When once we have cleared up this question of religious terminology, we find that the question of naturalism or supernaturalism does not touch the essence of religion and the problem as to the existence of God. When you have discarded supernaturalism you have full scope for religion.

One who bears clearly in mind that the word god is a purely relational term, applicable to any object to which men steadfastly and devoutly attend, will see that the moment a thing is so attended to it is necessary not only to call that object by its own name but also to call it a god; for its own name does not indicate that it is an object of worship, but the word god indicates exactly this. Suppose then that, following Matthew Arnold, we should teach that Goodness is God, there would be a lack of judgment displayed if anyone should say: "Why not simply call Goodness, Goodness? What is the use of saying Goodness is God?" Of course the answer is that when you say Goodness is Goodness, you have made no advance in thought; but when you say Goodness is God, if what you say is true, you have added the statement of a relationship in which some person stands or ought to stand to Goodness. You have said that Goodness either is or ought to be the reality worshipped. To feel that the word god becomes superfluous because we know what the object is which is worshipped would be as if a man, knowing his wife's name to be Mary, should imagine that there were no occasion for calling her his wife. But when he says, "Mary is my wife," he says very much

more than "Mary is Mary." Likewise it would be an astonishing proposal that we should never speak of King Edward as King, but simply as Edward. One might ask, How should we ever communicate the fact that Edward is King if we never called him the King? The only way would be a circumlocution by which in place of the word we should introduce the definition of king. And so as the word god is a relational term we must use it, if we wish to designate the relation. Nor let anyone imagine that this defence of my use of the word god as applying to Goodness, which I think is the object worthy of supreme worship, is altogether superfluous. During the last ten years I have been reiterating in ethical societies that as an actual fact Goodness is the God of those who are sincere and clear-thinking members of such societies. The result has been that many a time the criticism has been offered, "Even if we do reverence Goodness as the supreme necessity and reality of life, why need we call it God? Why not simply say that Goodness is Goodness?" The answer is that to many a person Goodness may be Goodness, and yet not be that person's God. And that the general use of relational terms justifies and the needs of communicating our thought necessitate our calling Goodness our God.

In connection with the naturalistic use of these two terms god and religion, I would have my readers clearly understand that in declaring that Goodness is God, I do not imply that goodness has always been everybody's god. Even implicitly and unconsciously men have not by any means always been worshipping goodness. But I do contend that ancient Judaism was an ethical religion, and that the Jews were worshipping Righteousness as a Real Power in the world and that Righteousness therefore was their God. I declare the same in regard to the

founders of Christianity and the Christian theologians of all ages. In spite of themselves, despite their metaphysical theories and their growing insistence upon the supernatural character of the being they worshipped, they nevertheless were devoutly ethical. Moral attributes, moral acts, were the power which they saw and felt to be the source of the highest blessings to mankind. Their religion and their God may not have been exclusively, but were supremely, ethical and naturalistic. The fact must not be overlooked that supernaturalism does not exclude the natural in the sense that naturalism excludes the supernatural. Persons who believe in the supernatural also believe in the natural, while on the other hand the naturalist excludes every factor which one cannot believe in except on the supposition that there exist personal agencies who are not living members of human society.

It is sometimes difficult to understand how Christian theologians dare stake their reputation as educated men upon the statement that it is a misuse of the word God to apply it to anything but a supernatural being. The comparative study of religion has been going on for a hundred years, and it is inexcusable for a person to speak as if he had never heard of any religion except that which sets up a personal Creator of the universe as the object of attention.

It is also growing difficult to understand how theologians can any longer assert that the doctrine of a personal Creator of the universe is the essential presupposition and the message of the Old and New Testament teaching. For half a century scholars have unearthed the truth, which Matthew Arnold and Sir John Seeley so ably set forth, that the Bible is not a book concerned chiefly with a life after death or a speculative doctrine about an in-

finite personal Creator and Governor of the universe. It is becoming an illiteracy of a kind that one ought to be ashamed of, so to misunderstand the Bible. And, as I believe, we shall find the Book of Common Prayer, if we analyse it, essentially naturalistic ; its supreme interest is the moral perfection of men on earth, and its supreme means are those which are verifiable, are at hand in human experience and equally at the disposal of those who totally reject all supernaturalism.

When we turn from mere definition to literary usage, we find not only that those poets and prose writers who have been endowed with the finest sense for the differences between words employ the word god exactly in the ways which our definition would justify and establish ; we further find that poets, somehow instinctively, in their better and higher moods designate as God Human Goodness itself. Take even so unlikely a writer as Swinburne, and you will find such stanzas as this :—

> A creed is a rod,
> And a crown is of night ;
> But this thing is God,
> To be man with thy might,
> To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
> and live out thy life as the light.

If God can never refer to anything but the personal Creator of the universe, this sentence makes no sense. Who could say that the personal intelligent First Cause of the universe is "to be man with thy might"? If again it be maintained that this is only a poetic and literary use, it must be answered that that is nothing against it. It is poetic and literary, but it is absolutely exact and precise. Let us substitute in Swinburne's sentence for the word god the definition of God which we have arrived at above, and it will read : This thing is

that which is supremely worthy of being attended to steadfastly and reverently in order to get the greatest blessings possible to man—to be man with thy might. Manliness, in short, is the thing which should be reverently attended to.

Or let us turn to the use of the word god found in a poem written by the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association. Mr Hooper is a professed Rationalist. Yet we find that he does not discard the word god. On the contrary, he applies it not only in a naturalistic but in a purely ethical sense. The poem to which I refer is entitled "The Spirit of Man," and it begins, "Spirit of Man, ascend thy throne." Still addressing the Spirit of Man, the poet continues :—

> That path where saints and prophets trod
> To one supreme confession leads :
> The god in man—for man—is God.
>
> Be thou that God enthroned below,
> With calm-eyed Truth at thy right hand,
> Who bids us dare all doubts, to know
> What men can fitly understand.
> Be Knowledge linked to Love and Peace,
> Break down the barriers of pride,
> That self, self-centred, may decrease,
> And thou, the boundless Self, abide !

Again applying our definition we find the absolute exactitude of the poet's terminology. He wishes that the spirit of man should be the power to which men turn their attention steadfastly and reverently in order to receive the highest blessings. What could make more fitting sense ? What greater proof of the accuracy of a definition can one find than that one can substitute the definition for the word wherever the word is used by the

best writers and find the sense not only preserved but elucidated ?

If our definition of religion is correct, it will not only provide us with a definition of the word god but also of the word worship. For worship is used to describe the distinctively religious mental act. Now what in fact is worship but, as our definition would lead us to think, the turning of the attention steadfastly and reverently to a source of supreme blessings ? The naturalistic sense in which this word could and must be used is the turning of reverent attention to human goodness, as the chief source of the supreme blessings of life.

And what is called prayer but this turning of attention, when one especially bears in mind the blessings which one wishes to receive ? It is the same act as worship, with emphasis thrown on the blessings desired.

The word church is a theological and a religious term, the use of which cannot be discontinued with the adoption of a scientific view of the universe. A church is a society for the worship of a being whom its members believe to be the source of the supreme blessings of life. The churches differ if the beings differ which are worshipped. A naturalistic church would be one for the worship of a being which was a verifiable factor in human experience. If it be true, as I believe, that the Christian churches have always essentially worshipped human goodness as the real redemptive power, then they have always been naturalistic, even if their champions thought and said to the contrary. We may understand them better than they have ever understood themselves in the past. A naturalistic church, therefore, need not count itself as essentially different from the great Christian Church. It is the Church at last awake and understanding itself better than before. We may then speak of the Church, meaning

what it will ultimately be in its forms and dogmas, as well as what it has been in the unconscious principle vitally controlling its life from the first.

The essentially religious acts of worship and prayer may be deeply coloured by the consciousness that one has neglected one's religious duty. Then the religious act, instead of being wholly joyous, is tinged with a feeling of sorrow for the past neglect. The person is glad and sad at once, and we call him repentant.

The forgiveness of sins is the inrushing of new confidence and strength and hope, due to the re-established relation between the worshipper and his God. Forgiveness is a characteristic experienced in every religion, although it rises in the scale from the most superstitious to the wholly verifiable, and from the non-moral and immoral to the purely ethical types of religion.

The word saint must be retained in a naturalistic scheme of religion to indicate the person in whom the union of the worshipper and the worshipped is habitual and for the most part dominant, so that any wayward impulses of his nature submit without protest to the spiritual discipline. And the word holiness must be kept as a term to designate the saint's ability to do right effortlessly. Someone has defined ethical religiousness as glad conscientiousness. The sense of duty is to most the sense of a burden and of a task that is heavy. The saint is one whose burden, strangely enough, lifts him instead of his having any longer to lift it.

Most persons who have discarded the traditional theology have found themselves called upon, in speaking of the Founder of Christianity, to drop the word "Christ" and restrict themselves to the name "Jesus." But such a procedure on their part is again due to lack of con-

structive insight and imagination. When we discard the supernatural offices of Christ he does not become for us simply a private person. He remains still official as a Saviour of the world. Just as King Edward is both Edward and King even when the kingship to us implies no supernatural grace, or as President Roosevelt is both Roosevelt and President, irrespective of our theory of government ; so Jesus Christ is both the individual and private person Jesus, and also the organiser, the point of departure, of a new movement, the representative of an objective and universal principle in man. Christ is the anointed one in that he is the embodiment, the illustration, and supreme instance of the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. The more one knows of the special mission of Socrates, the more one sees that Socrates is the philosopher and not the moral saviour of the world. The more one knows even of Buddha the more one realises that he is not the principle of progressive manhood among nations, not the founder of a kingdom of righteous men on earth. For ever and ever Buddhism, by its denial of time and space and individual progressive existence as a good, has shut itself out, except for an Eastern people in their period of stationary suspension of ethical development, from rivalry with Christianity. Buddhism will not redeem the world, whereas Christianity, if it be true to what the new criticism and the new knowledge of evolution reveal to our gaze, will establish a world-wide kingdom of righteousness for nations and individuals. Whether it ceases to call itself Christianity is a matter of indifference. The Redeemer-principle, the Christ-principle, came to consciousness in the man Jesus, and he is therefore in the highest degree what the rest of us may in part attain. Even should anyone ever in the future transcend him, still it will only be by him and in

glad acknowledgment of the debt to him. There never can in the future be a dividing of the world into Christianity and not Christianity. It will only be a new and more Christian Christianity, compatible with liberty and reason. Thus it seems that not only the word Christ as the epithet of Jesus must be retained, but also the term "Christianity" must be applied to a civilisation which has discarded all supernaturalism and miracle and has engrafted social democracy and science upon the tree that has now grown from the grain of mustard-seed which Christ planted.

From another point of view, also, the word Christ is preferable for a naturalist to the word Jesus, to indicate the Founder of Christianity. The authenticity of the personal life of Jesus, as narrated in the New Testament, has been questioned, so that, in the judgment of some whose scholarship and impartiality are to be respected, to speak of Jesus is to speak of a purely mythological or imaginary personage. But nobody, so far as I am aware, has ever doubted the fact that in the New Testament there is figured forth an ideal or type of manhood worthy of our respect and admiration. Nor has anyone ever doubted that this ideal has been the mighty power of the New Testament; and many would go so far as to say that, the ideal being there and commanding our involuntary but rational admiration, it makes very little difference whether the person Jesus was a myth or not. It would seem to me that the word Christ may well designate the ideal which the Gospels shadow forth. For in the case of every individual person, whether mythical or historical, the ideal he suggests is the universal in the particular, is prior to it, is not fully realised in it, and will last independently of it, when once it has dawned as an ideal upon the imagination of men.

There is much discussion among supernaturalists as to the nature of the Incarnation of God in Christ; while persons who have discarded the supernaturalism seem to have lost all use for the word incarnation. Yet it must not be overlooked that this word is a very common one in everyday, non-religious speech and in general literature. We say that a man is the very incarnation of selfishness or of loving-kindness; we sometimes even say that a man is the devil incarnate. And so there are a hundred phrases of this kind which are perfectly clear and legitimate. In all of them, however, it will be found that what is referred to as being incarnate is a principle, an idea, an abstract quality, a great tendency. Surely then of all human beings it must be said that in this sense Jesus was an incarnation; and few will deny that he was an incarnation of the Moral Ideal of Manhood. The principle of the beneficent service of mankind was incarnate in him. It is because he was an incarnation of this principle that thousands have lived by him and will to the end of time. The incarnation then must for ever remain a fundamental conception of religion. No science, no social democracy, can render to any degree superfluous this notion of incarnation. Incarnation is always the actualisation of a universal principle in a particular moral agent. Until all men are incarnations of the principle of constructive moral beneficence, and to a higher degree, Jesus will remain pre-eminent, and, as I have indicated above, it is quite possible that, in proportion as he is approached, gratitude to him will increase rather than diminish.

The word sin, next to the word god itself, is exclusively a religious term. Transgression is never sin except it be against that which is counted a god—*i.e.* against a being to which steadfast and reverent

devotion is turned as to the source of life's supreme blessings. It follows inevitably that worship of the Moral Ideal and all the Powers that make for its actualisation would transform all violations of the moral law into sins.

Of all theological terms, possibly none has fallen into more utter disrepute than the word devil. Even persons who are still professed theologians avoid the word, and are generally ready to confess that they have ceased to believe in the thing. This is the more strange, for there has been no corresponding disbelief in the existence of evil nor has the sense of horror of iniquity diminished. On the contrary, one of the striking characteristics of our age is the deepening of the sense not only of one's own sin, but of the reality of sin stamping itself on laws of property and on politics, and manifesting itself in domestic institutions. Indeed, the very institutions which once seemed to us almost perfect, are now discovered in great part to be unjust and untrue. Many are beginning to feel that it is a dishonour to be rich, despite the legality of one's ownership of property.

The devil may not exist as a personal agent beyond man ; but it is strange that at the very moment when we have discovered his non-existence, we have a new and appalling sense that all the attributes which constituted his personality are more rampant in the world than we in our former ignorance had ever dreamt. We are also awakening to a new realisation of the unity in all the various forms of evil. Things seemingly so different as lying and murder and stealing and licentiousness and love of display and their effects on mind and body, disease, poverty, pain, insanity, despair and early death, all these things seem to be one in nature. They are evil because they are identical in their tendency—deathward. They

make for the destruction of joyous life, not only in the individual but in the race. Furthermore, we discover not only the identity in the essential trend but the organic unity, the cohesive affinity, among all forms and elements of evil. If Plato was right in saying that all virtue is one, we are right in saying that all vice is one, not only in its abstract definition but as a consolidated army. It is an organised enemy against health, gladness, long life, mutual confidence and trust and hope among men. And all evils tend to co-operate. There is an evolution of evil as well as of good. Following Spencer's definition of evolution we may say that evil tends to develop from the incoherent, indefinite and homogeneous to the coherent, definite and heterogeneous. It is glaringly true that prostitution has become capitalised, systematised, co-ordinated and elaborated. If virtue is health, evil is a disease like cancer, it has a virility like that of quickening life and a power of growth as intense and rapid as it is monstrous.

In proportion as one is conscious of this unifying, growing, begetting power among the various forms of evil, one is led naturally and irresistibly to do what is called personifying evil. But this personifying of evil is grossly misrepresented, if it is understood as literally attributing self-conscious intelligence to all evil as if it actually possessed a memory and senses and purposes and plans over and above the memories and senses and purposes and plans of individual men and women. The personification is simply to indicate the organic unity which springs up among all evilly-minded persons, unifying all evil tendencies in institutions and traditions and drawing to itself all the evil propensities which exist even in comparatively good men and women. Although in the literal sense we cannot attribute a unified personality or

ego to the evil in the world, we can still less declare that evil is impersonal. It consists of a plurality of persons—of living men and women who are bad and plot mischief, who feed cancerously upon the organism of society. We all see that the good people of the world tend to become a unified spiritual organism. But we are beginning to detect that the evil people of the world and all people in so far as they are evil in a similar manner although under cover of darkness tend to become a unified spiritual organism. Evil not only exists—it is alive. It is not only alive but transmits life ; and all the elements of its life tend to become organised. The intense, vivid sense of this organising principle of unity among the elements of evil forces one to personify evil. If one does not do so, one falls short of a concrete, full and alert realisation of its nature. One needs a name for all forms of evil as constituting a power which begets after its own kind in the world. Now the literary name for evil thus thought of is devil.

We may not believe in a personal devil, but we must believe in a devil who acts very like a person. All spiritual organisms so act. A political party acts like a person, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, England herself, in proportion as we have imagination, seem to us to act like persons and to have individuality, although we are perfectly aware that they do not possess a self-consciousness distinct from the consciousness of the individual human beings who constitute them.

It is greatly to be deplored that the belief in the devil and the use of the word devil have gone out of fashion. Only one other possible decline of faith and of use of a word could be worse. The decline of belief in God and the disuse of the word god would be a greater calamity ; for God must stand for Goodness as a unifying and unified

power in the world. But goodness until it has triumphed is in a terrible conflict with badness. It is not only that the idea of the good suggests the idea of the bad and that these are correlative terms. It is that the good and the bad both exist and both have vitalising strength ; accordingly it is a danger to the cause of the good, if by dropping the word devil we undervalue the quickening capacity of evil. Evil may spring up in a day, in a night, almost before one knows it, in dark places, in disguised forms, in beautiful shapes ; and to make light of it, to think that the forces of evil are only a chaotic mob, is the devil's chance. The forces of evil, if scattered, have been scattered by the organised efforts of the good. The moment they have a chance and the moment the capitalists and statesmen of evil give the word, they will fall into line as an armed battalion. Witness the growth of private capitalism into anti-social and anti-human trusts.

Although the devil be not a person, we must not imagine that evil is a thing dead, inanimate and material. Evil, as much as good, is of the nature of mind ; it is spiritual. It is inter-personal and super-personal. Then let this old theological term be reinstated in the literature of religion, and let us educate the people to know exactly what is meant by it, and why and how we use it.

In a book shortly to be published, I dwell at length upon the naturalistic and ethical use of the word heaven, in treating of the phrase, " Our Father who art in heaven." I therefore here only mention the word that my reader shall not imagine that it may not have a place in the nomenclature of men who insist that religion must become scientific. But the word hell must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. As we shall find that the word heaven is the religious term for a perfect society, so the word hell is one which the religious conscious-

ness has put forth to designate any society where evil is triumphant, and where the consequences of sin—disease, insanity, hate—are rampant. The word God points to an individual, to persons, and to inter-personal and super-personal relationships and factors. Likewise the word devil. But the words heaven and hell designate the opposite moral extremes of types of society. Shelley illustrates this notion in his famous line, "Hell is a city much like London." Hell is a company of agents in whom moral insight has faded to darkness and enthusiasm has burnt out to ashes; hardly a memory remains of the early dream of heaven as the fellowship of the good. In the New Testament and in the Prayer Book hell is a kind of society rather than a place and a time. We may accordingly cease to believe in a life after death and a place in which the vicious will then congregate and plot. Still we need a word to designate the fellowship of evil. There are plague-spots on earth and times in human history and even in the obscure proceedings of groups of nobodies which are hell. By our using the word in this manner no one would be misled into thinking that we believe in a life of torment after death, and the vocabulary of humanistic religion would be the richer.

When I was considering the word devil, I dwelt upon our growing sense of the reality and power of evil in modern life. It would be very strange if, during the break-up of the old interpretations of religion, and while the consciousness of sin and the chill of moral isolation are casting us down, we should have no more use for a word to designate a society of the wayward and cynical.

The word hell will again point to a physical torment of the damned, as well as a purely mental horror. As men advance in refinement of nervous organisation and in the

capacity and leisure for reflection and self-criticism, hell on earth will become more and more dreaded as the abomination of horrors. Preachers will, more and more, teach a doctrine of hell-fire. Out of kindness they will terrify by presenting the evil effects, indirect and remote, of selfish thoughts and dispositions. We must frighten people away from the edge of the abyss which yawns this side of death. It is the duty of the more experienced to warn the inexperienced and the unwary of the awful consequences of certain thoughts and deeds upon mind and body, not only to themselves but to wife, child, neighbour and nation. Those are probably not far from the truth who maintain that no sane being would yield to moral sin if in the moment of temptation there stood out in his imagination all the terrible consequences to everybody concerned as do the momentary and immediate pleasures to himself accompanying the deed of transgression. Many a wrong deed bears no perceptibly bitter fruit for ten, twenty or forty years in the life of the individual ; then only does it blossom into dishonour, disease and despair. A deed may never come back to its doer, but it will to his child, to the wife, the neighbour, the casual comrade and to the nation. With the nation it may be only in a hundred years or five hundred that the germinating seed of misery will spring up to choke the goodness, happiness and efficiency of a people. We must preach hell-fire, and by that name. It is an effeminacy akin to the indifference altogether of our day to questions of religious discipline which has made us dwell more upon the tender mercy of God, and less upon the inexorable rigour with which evil deeds beget sin, misery and early death. We hear much of heaven and little of hell, because preachers have not yet gripped the effects of mischievous deeds in this world.

The discarding of the old belief in a supernatural hell has led them to the foolish conclusion that there is little for the wicked and their victims to fear.

The word redemption likewise describes a certain experience and a certain purpose in humanistic religion. Man's very constitution, his organic structure as a whole, is moral; and wickedness is always the excess or deficiency of some special impulse of his nature. Every person who sins falls away from his normal state. That state, however, despite every deviation from it, is still prefigured in man's constitution. In wrong-doing, the delinquent feels that he is sacrificing his entire being in the long run to some special or transient interest. In such a case the wrong-doer can be set right only at a cost, only by suffering. The metaphor, therefore, involved in the word redemption is a fitting figure to suggest this fact. A price must be paid for restoration to the rightful owner, and this price may be the happiness and self-realisation of others.

Salvation is a word commonly used in general literature in a non-theological and non-religious sense. It means preservation from any sort of danger, calamity or destruction. In a naturalistic religion it must be retained in the distinctive religious sense of deliverance from the power and penalty of sin.

The word eternal has plainly two meanings, that of ordinary literature and that of current theology. In the latter it signifies literally unending existence, but in literature it means the kind of life lived by one who is more interested in the remotest and most public issues than in momentary and private concerns. It means moral superiority to transient troubles. In addition to this, it signifies in literature the relatively lasting, as when one speaks of the climate of the tropics as eternal summer,

or when one speaks of an eternal round of duties. The word, in this sense, is justifiable. It is pedantry that would restrict it to the rigid sense given it by the old-fashioned theologians. In the literary sense the word eternal must be preserved as a distinctively religious term. For whether human interests be literally everlasting, continuing on after death or not, there is a striking difference between living for pomp and vanities and living in the real service of all men for all time. The ethical life is therefore an eternal life, in that the individual himself, although he has but an hour of continued existence before him, is interested in concerns that will abide practically for ever. He is not only interested, but is himself contributing to this unending life. His character and his conduct are means to enduring ends.

There is still another justification of the use of the word eternal in naturalistic religion. The qualities which distinguish it are the same which were characteristic of the eternal life as described by the older theologians. The finer spirits of Christianity have always noted that the word eternal points not so much to continued existence after death, as to a quality of heart and soul attainable here and now as well as hereafter. As Schleiermacher said, we may be eternal in each moment of time—superior to personal disappointments.

Likewise with the word infinite. It will be a great gain to religion and to life, when the grotesque subtleties which certain schools of metaphysicians have woven about this word have been stripped away. Infinite is a term for the emotions ; it should treat of values instead of limits in space and time. When one's sentiments rise above a certain intensity, differences of degree cannot be discerned or felt ; one experiences a distinct and peculiar emotional sensation of limitlessness and vastness. Wherever this

emotion is experienced, it is justifiable to speak of the infinite, describing as such that which causes the emotion. Now, it happens that the great principles and ends of the moral life and the presence of persons devoted to these ends awaken in us a degree of awe and admiration so intense and profound that exact distinctions of measured difference become impossible. That which produces this emotion seems to be without limit and without bounds. With this interpretation, the word infinite ceases to offend our scientifically disciplined judgment.

The word almighty, as an epithet of God, like the words eternal and infinite, should be rescued from the falsely rigid and pedantic use of the supernaturalists. For the emotions, that power which exceeds measure is practically almighty ; in this literary usage the word means mightier than one can measure. Such an epithet fits most congruously the notion of the active good in the world. The more we study the good as a power, the more we are conscious of its immeasurable might. But, what is still more significant, when we look to the future we see that that might will be augmented by leaps and bounds and more quickly than it has ever been in the past. In proportion as the physical universe comes under the control of nations, the power of the good in the world will be increased.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RITUAL

It might not be difficult to prove, both historically and philosophically, that where there is no ceremonial there is no religion.

The historical proof lies in the fact disclosed by thorough research, that every nation or race known to us as holding religious ideas possesses some form, however rudimentary, of ceremonial. In the main, with the complexity of the ideas, the rites develop; although there may be counteracting tendencies which prevent an equal pace in each. It is generally thought that as a religion grows more spiritual it loses in ceremonial complexity. It is thought that the inwardness of one's ideas of God naturally militates against outward forms. But even this is found not to be the case, if we take a psychological and, so to speak, physiological, and not merely a spectacular, view of ceremony. The case of the Society of Friends is one in point. Superficially and outwardly it would seem that persons who sit motionless in a meeting for an hour together, and dress with severe simplicity, are anti-ritualists, and disprove once for all the dictum that where there is no ceremonial there is no religion. But first let us remember that symbolical dress is the most striking element in the furniture of even spectacular ritual.

Further, in proportion as Quakers have discarded their peculiar garb, they have generally discarded their peculiar tenets. But, quite apart from the question of dress, for a number of persons to sit silently together is the most dramatic and eloquent ceremonial ever invented. Physiologically there is no action involving more self-control, more domination of every nerve and muscle than motionlessness. Think of the tongue, with its proneness to move when one's mind is bursting with ideas to be communicated. Think of the eye that so easily wanders ; of the ear solicited by every stray sound. Consider, again, the tremendous physiological self-consciousness developed by the presence of others, unless one is dominated by an overpowering idealism. We need only to peep beneath the surface of things to see that here is action—and action that requires not only an almost hypnotic control of a whole assembly by a single thought, but also action which produces upon every onlooker a most powerful impression of the reality of the thing signified.

Again, to some persons the fact that religion is a function of ceremonial, and *vice versa*, is obscured by the æsthetic meagreness of many ceremonials of which the underlying religious conviction is highly intellectual and inward. There is a tendency to imagine that rites which are not æsthetic are not ceremonial, and that an absence of the fine arts proves an absence of ritual. This, however, is utterly a mistake. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has not in and of itself any æsthetic element ; or, if it has, it is only what is borrowed from the general social grace and manners of the persons who communicate. It is quite possible that many among the humble folk who entered the Christian movement at the start, because it was a burial and sick-benefit society, partook of the

Lord's Supper in a manner not more graceful and charming outwardly than they ate any other meal. Likewise it is difficult to see very striking æsthetic elements or any elaboration of the various fine arts in the rite of immersion. If there were anything beautiful in the ceremony, it could only be something quite accidental—as that the Church official performing it happened to be graceful in the movements of his body and well developed in physique. Even then, however, it is hard to imagine that men with their clothes dripping with water would conform to our notions of beauty in drapery. Likewise the dripping face and streaming hair must be such as at least no ordinary person would count æsthetically attractive compared with the face when dry.

What is true of the Lord's Supper and baptism from an æsthetic point of view holds equally of the details of all the essential features of Church ceremonial. The making of the sign of the Cross has nothing in itself of the beautiful; nor has the elevation of the host; nor have the forms of the marriage rite and of burial. It is altogether a mistake, then, to identify ritual even in its most elaborate forms with the fine arts, and then to argue from an absence of the latter that the former is not present. Even if we confine ourselves to the elaborate services of the Roman Catholic Church on Sundays and the great festival days, of the splendour of which one hears much, we must admit that the ritual proper is not splendid. There is nothing especially beautiful in a man's kneeling many times, in the bowings of others before him, in his muttering of the words of a book, in his turnings about, and in the changes made in dress.

Probably the right relation between the fine arts and ritual is that suggested by a passage in Mr Dearmer's

*Handbook*, where he says that many persons are kept away from the Church on account of its bad music, and for this reason he pleads that the music shall be good. This suggestion is sound, both religiously and psychologically. In a community accustomed to music of a high class you must either have none at all in your ritual or a kind which will not give offence. If robes are to be worn, they must harmonise in colour, shape, and quality of fabric with the community's feelings of the appropriateness of all these to the occasion. We thus discover the whole principle of the relation of the fine arts to ritual. If the ceremony is to be in a building, that building must meet the requirements of the people architecturally. But whether the costumes and the building are really æsthetic or not is wholly beside the mark. The one question is, Do they keep anyone away on account of their ugliness ?

Perhaps the proposition, that where there is no ceremonial there is no religion, should be taken as referring not to an individual human being, but to a nation ; and not to a nation at any one instant but throughout its history. It is possible that after generations of ritual, religion without the visible signs might continue to live. It is certainly possible that in a community where various religious rites are regularly practised by various groups of worshippers, many individual persons who never participate in these rites may be most devoutly religious. In such a case, however, it may be questioned whether these individuals do not constantly have the fundamental problems and sentiments of religion thrust upon their attention by the very ceremonials which they themselves abstain from and perhaps regard with loathing. The credit, therefore, for the religion even of those who have no ritual, must in such cases be assigned to ritual.

After these explanations, it is probable that no one will contend against the general proposition that in a nation where there is no ceremonial there can be no religion.

Philosophically, the case stands thus: Religious ceremony is in its very nature sacramental, if we take the Prayer Book's definition of a sacrament as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. A ceremony which did not signify an inward and spiritual grace, and which was not thought, at least by the devotees themselves of the cult, to be necessary to the conveyance of the grace, would never have been adopted. A man might possibly, on philosophical and ethical grounds, reject every sacrament as unnecessary and even pernicious. Still he could not deny that those who did practise a religious rite believed in the necessity for it, and therefore, under the domination of this belief, positively needed it.

But why is a sign necessary? Or rather, what is the nature of the inward and spiritual grace which requires a vehicle? If, again, we take the point of view not of the individual alone but of the community or the nation, we shall easily be convinced that every spiritual grace is dependent upon an outward sign. If such a grace is something that is communicated from the heart and will of one person to the heart and will of another, through their conscious intelligence, it becomes almost self-evident to anybody who knows human life, that there could be no communication of it without a sign, as a symbol of the thought of the one understood by both. The whole of language is nothing but a system of signs, and at bottom every communication of an idea from one person to another, if that idea be true or be felt by both to be true, partakes of the nature of a sacrament. What is the conveying of an inspiring thought from one to

another by an outward and visible sign but an instance of the very thing which the Church of England declares to be a sacrament? One may readily concede that the word sacrament does not apply unless the grace communicated is some religious principle or virtue. But then one cannot deny that religious ceremonial is only a specific variety of a whole genus of rituals, which, in proportion as the matters with which they deal are sacred, are sacraments. Any word which is the exclusive sign of a special meaning, most will concede, is essential to the conveyance of that meaning to another. Words, however, constitute only one system of signs. Gestures make up another, dress another, styles of architecture another.

We cannot understand the philosophy of ceremonial in religion unless we understand its use, and the necessity for it, in other domains of human interest. There is very much in human life which is ritualistic, yet which we fail to recognise as such. Every act, in so far as it is an arbitrary sign of something in the mind of him who performs it, by which he is able to communicate that mental something to the mind of another, is an act of ritual. Persons, therefore, who disapprove of religious ritual on the ground that ritual altogether is an absurdity and without foundation in practical necessity, must be ready to sweep it away from its other domains as well. Let a man strip from human manners all that is not an immediate necessity of direct satisfaction, and he will begin to realise that, whether the similar statement be true of religion or not, it is literally a fact that where there is no ceremonial there are no manners. If there were no acts agreed upon arbitrarily by the community and performed, as signs of deference, of respect, of cordiality, of trust, of affection, of acquaintanceship, of

being strangers, to what a state of barren crudity and isolation should we be reduced!

In a future volume I shall briefly return to the philosophy of ritual. I shall remind my readers that some sort of a sign of entrance into the Church, a physical act understood to indicate the mental act, must be submitted to, else it is inconceivable that the Church could ever acquire new voluntary members. Of course the Church might count herself synonymous with the nation, and say that every person born on the soil of the nation was a member. But then it becomes quite clear that the necessity of a sign has not been done away with. The sign ceases to be a voluntary act; but the fact of being born within the geographical area of the nation becomes itself the symbol; and, as it is an event not within the arbitrary will of the individual, the Church thereby ceases to receive voluntary members. Here, accordingly, the necessity for arbitrary signs is confirmed instead of being disproved.

In business life ritual is as important and prominent as it is in religion. Constantly the commercial community must by common consent seize upon some one act or circumstance which is to serve no longer in its ordinary and natural capacity alone, but as an arbitrary sign which once chosen possesses almost a magical power. What a difference between the spoken word of an agreement and the signature to a written document! The difference is not in the natural inferiority of the word or in a lack of honour on the part of the man who feels at liberty to break his word. The difference between the spoken word and the signature is that the community has never stamped the spoken word as the legal sign committing the speaker. If once the word spoken in the presence of others were to be made the sign, one would find that

the sense of inviolability now attached to the signature would be transferred to the verbal symbol. In escaping from religion, one has not escaped from ritual. One has only escaped from the word ritual ; and quite possibly it is that in religion and not the thing which gives offence to many.

Ritual as a social phenomenon is extremely complex. For instance, I have been speaking of acts chosen arbitrarily as signs of some inward and spiritual grace. Now if a totally new set of acts that had no meaning otherwise were chosen, the case of ritual would be comparatively simple. But nearly always an act serves in a double capacity, both as an arbitrary sign and as an actual direct benefit to oneself or another. For instance, to drink a glass of wine may be a direct service or disservice to oneself. This would be quite enough to ensure the practice or condemnation of it. Yet it is just such an act as drinking a glass of wine which is seized upon and made to do duty in another capacity. If you drink in the company of others, it may be taken as a symbol of friendship, of fellowship. To refuse to perform the act in this way may be the grossest insult. To perform it with certain persons may be the occasion of losing caste with others, and may act as a signal for a social boycott.

It requires considerable alertness and acuteness in watching one's conduct throughout a single day to discover how many acts, which one does as if they were of direct expediency, serve also in the capacity of symbols. Unlike the lifting of the hat, the shaking of hands, the formal greetings with friends, which are purely symbolical acts, nearly everything we do is just as much serviceable as it is ritualistic. The ritual nature of these acts which have another import is one which we are prone to forget entirely in the ordinary course of life.

Take, for instance, the kind of clothes we wear. How few of us fully realise that the distinction between the conventional dress of men and women is a matter of ritual. It would be almost impossible to detect at a distance whether most human beings of the age of fifty were men or women if they were dressed alike, if the men were shaved and the method of wearing the hair were the same. Because of this possible confusion it is that the law makes it a criminal offence for men to wear women's clothes or women men's. It is here, however, wholly a question of ritual. The woman's dress, besides serving as a convenience and a decency, serves as a sign to advertise that she is a woman. So of a man's dress. This difference, however, is no more striking than that in the costume of different classes of society.

We are so accustomed to wear clothes which immediately advertise the class we belong to, that we do not realise the effects that would come, were we suddenly to don the style of dress of people of another station. Only when we imaginatively picture the consequences do we realise the deep psychological hold which the signs have upon the mind of the community and upon our own habits. No people who are not working men dress like them, which means, not that the dress of the day-labourer is inconvenient or not beautiful or necessarily untidy, but simply that any man above the working class would almost as lief die as be identified by the community with those who are disinherited from all the greatest privileges of humanity. He might also shrink from the suspicion of insanity which would be hurled at him if people, knowing him to be rich, saw him in the garb of a day-labourer. It is equally true that the moment people of the working class, by any accident of fortune, become rich, they instantly assume the dress of the classes of

society above the working class; not primarily because that dress is æsthetically or hygienically preferable, but because it stands as a symbol for social position and the command of power and opportunity.

When certain classes of persons wear distinctive uniform, it becomes more immediately evident that their clothes are not only for convenience and decency, but that the peculiar colour or shape or ornamentation is a sign of their social position or function. Yet it seems so natural that the postman, the soldier, the sailor and the professional nurse should wear uniforms, that we easily forget that it is only by making the dress arbitrarily a sign of something with which it has no inherent connection that we are able instantly to recognise in the distance the postman, the soldier, sailor and nurse as such. What a marvellously efficient system of communicating a knowledge of such invisible yet powerful realities as social function and position, through the eye! How terribly cruel was the use made of the ritual of dress in the case of the Jews in the Ghetto! How horrible it is in the present custom of a prison garb and a workhouse uniform! But all these cases prove at least the universal secular recognition of outward and visible signs for organic social functions and relations. It is then a little strange that persons who accept, for instance, as altogether suitable the costume for the nurse or the uniform for the postman, should speak with contempt of a distinctive garb for priests. Logically and practically the transference of one's contempt from the priest to the dress he wears is altogether unjustifiable. For his office would be just as contemptible, if it were contemptible, whether he dressed in uniform or not. But the tremendous efficiency of ritual is proved by this almost instinctive transference of horror for the inward reality to the outward and visible

sign. The only justification for wishing to remove the priestly garb without abolishing the priesthood is that you would be removing one powerful means by which the priesthood announces its existence to the community. Nothing is more striking upon the first visit of a stranger to Rome than the enormous number of priests who throng the streets. The impression is created of the ever-present power of the Church. Strip from the clothes of the priest the signs of his office and this reminder of the existence of the Church would vanish instantly. In Berlin the officers of the army, thanks to the military use of ritual, are in similar domination over the mind of a stranger. One never can escape the sense of the haunting, alert presence of the military power.

So true is it that the unseen functions and relationships of human society are dependent upon systems of arbitrary signs that one may well say that with the abolition of all the signs would ensue an annihilation of the functions. If not only the distinctiveness of his garb but every other arbitrary signal of office of the priest were removed, he would no longer be a priest, in that he could not possibly be recognised ; and, not being recognised, he would not be allowed to perform the very rudiments of the priestly function.

As a part, then, of a general policy for abolishing the social function of any class it would be justifiable to attempt to forbid their ritualistic dress. But if one's hatred of the thing signified is to extend to some of the signs by which it is signified, it ought to extend to them all. If the object be not to abolish the function of a certain class, but only to repress it, to deprive it of part of its power and restrict it within narrower limits, then to strip it of some of its symbols while allowing it the use of others is justifiable both logically and practically.

Undoubtedly one sees in the difference of the paraphernalia of the dress of Roman Catholic priests, of Anglican clergymen, and of Nonconformist preachers, a graduated scale of the degrees of ascendency of the priest in the three respective religious communities.

An individualistic philosophy of religion, politics and economics is the only point of view from which the ritual of dress can be opposed. And historically it has been opposed by anarchistic and anti-socialistic theorists. It will be found that in proportion as a man's social function and social position are counted as less significant than his all-round individuality as a human being and than his own private liberty, in that proportion symbolic dress has been abolished. Individualistic religious liberty is the source of the hatred of the social function of the priest and preacher and of the Church, and is thus the origin of the hatred of the priest's dress. It is equally the origin of the abolition of uniform generally. The officer of the English army is not in uniform except when on duty. He is a civilian among civilians in his everyday life in England. Uniform prevails here to-day only to mark the disgrace of poverty or crime, or to serve commercially and as a defence for property or to announce sex. The postman has a uniform because the function of transmitting written communications is considered so important in business that the postman's individuality is as nothing compared with his official responsibility in delivering letters. Likewise the policeman is dressed symbolically. The individuality of the policeman is as nothing compared to his defence of property. A policeman is ten times a man, and therefore we dress him as a superman. But what a commentary upon our modern society that the social function of the policeman is counted thus infinitely more valuable than that of the

school teacher! The authority of the school teacher would be enhanced and the work made easy were he or she, at least in school hours, to wear a teacher's dress. And this will surely come as we again recognise the intellectual and moral functions of the State.

Carlyle's humorous philosophy of clothes was but a chapter in the philosophy of outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. Carlyle perhaps exaggerated the significance of clothes. We should not be reduced even outwardly to a level, if all symbolic dress were discarded. Other arbitrary signs would be chosen which would indicate differences of sentiment, prejudice, spiritual power, origin, ancestry, and what not. Indeed, Carlyle himself takes clothes but as a type of all forms of symbolism.

We have seen that there is nothing peculiar to religion as distinct from manners or commerce which makes it dependent upon ritual, and have found that as an actual fact manners and commerce are just as ritualistic as religion. One may say of commerce, as of the other two: where there is no ritual there is no trade. Where there is no outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of exchange of ownership of commodities, there is no exchange. Accordingly, when the Founder of Christianity insisted upon immersion as a sign for admission to the Church and upon a common meal as an evidence of loyalty among members, when he declared that baptism was essential to salvation, he was doing nothing different from what the business man does; nor were his reasons different.

When we bear in mind that it is no peculiarity of religion which makes ceremonial a necessity for it, we see how false is the generally prevalent notion that the supernaturalism of religion is what makes the resort to

signs and rites indispensable. It may well be granted that if the spiritual grace to be communicated is the favour of some personal agent beyond man and nature who requires formal homage, then the making of the signs that please him would become the *sine quâ non* of gaining his favour. But here again we note that the sign is necessary not because the agent communicated with is supernatural, but simply because he is another personal agent, and that a system of signs must always be set up if of two persons one is to communicate a knowledge of his inward disposition to the other.

This statement opens up to us a second phase of the nature of ritual, suggested in the Prayer Book definition by the words "inward and spiritual."

The spiritual grace is never merely a general idea unrelated to the persons who communicate or receive it. There is never simply a sign of a general or a particular fact such as a scientific formula might be or an account of some event which took place in ancient Athens unrelated to the persons by whom and to whom to-day the sign is made. Always his own will and his own heart are committed by the person making a ritualistic sign and are received and accepted by those to whom it is made. Participation in an act of ritual is a personal commitment or pledge, and therefore is an event in the moral and social history of the participants. The woman who assumes the rôle of bride in the marriage ceremony is actually thereby becoming the wife of the man who stands by her side. She is not simply symbolically illustrating in fantastic manner some general principle of monogamy. She is staking almost all her chances for happiness in life upon the act she is performing. The marriage ceremony is infinitely removed in its nature from a show or a symbolical representation of some real event which took

place elsewhere. A great event is always taking place in the life of the persons who are participating in any religious ritual. In the funeral rite, that which is conspicuous is the immediate reality to the mourners of what is taking place. They have lost a relative, a friend. The mourning garments are symbols of an actual state of heart and will. The deference shown to the dead might be shown in some other manner, but that other manner must needs be symbolical. A man going through the ceremony of taking holy orders is actually committing himself to a profession. To take part in the ceremony of becoming an Anglican clergyman while being at heart a Roman Catholic or an Atheist, is to commit a deed of unutterable perfidy. The girl who goes through the ceremony of taking the veil as a nun is setting her life's destiny on the act. If she does it insincerely, she is wrecking both her character and her happiness. If she is forced into doing it, those instigating the coercion are committing a heinous crime. The little child baptised may never afterwards wholly escape from the moral and social effects of the fact that his parents and the priest committed him to the Roman Catholic or the Anglican communion.

In the light of this terrible realism, one wonders how the expressions "mere ceremony," "mere ritual," have come so generally into use. Who has ever seen such a thing as a mere ceremony or a mere ritual? For if there were such a thing as the word "mere" implies, how could the act be fraught with far-reaching and unescapable consequences? There are persons who speak lightly of the marriage ceremony, as if it were a mere form and as if it could make no difference in the duties and responsibilities and the affection of the woman towards the man, whether she go through the marriage

ceremony or not. Yet no woman ever defied this "mere ceremony," who forgot her defiance to the end of her days. There is no such thing as a mere ceremony of ritual; for the moment it ceases to be an indispensable sign in the eyes of the community, it is not the sign at all.

Thus we see how absolutely mistaken is the judgment of those who associate elaborate ritual with stage performances and theatrical displays. There are three fundamental distinctions which place a world-wide difference between ritual and drama. In drama the actor only pretends to be the person he represents. In ritual he actually is the person. A man who was not a priest, were he to personate a priest in the performance of the Mass, would expose himself to being stoned to death by the outraged members of the Catholic communion. And he would deserve severe punishment. On the other hand, what could more outrage our sense of human dignity than that an actual cardinal of the Church of Rome should personate a cardinal on the stage in a play of Shakespeare's? How is it that we have this terrific sense of the incompatibility of ritual and drama, if there be anything essentially akin in the two? It violates every principle of dramatic art to attempt to attract the public by any kind of realism whereby the original persons should, so to speak, play their own parts. Even when contemporary events are depicted, in proportion as the drama respects itself, it preserves its method by which one person pretends to be another. In Miss Elizabeth Robins' recent play, entitled *Votes for Women*, it might have been easy to draw larger crowds, and secure a longer run of the play, if the original women conspicuous as "Suffragettes" had themselves taken the chief parts in the performance. But they knew and the

writer of the play and its stage producer knew that the play would have lost its entire force as a political pamphlet, if notoriety and success had been bought at this price. It is true that on the music-hall stage persons conspicuous in real life sometimes exhibit themselves for money to the gaping crowds, but scarcely ever is there such lack of taste shown, as that they should assume a part analogous to their own in real life. So there is no question here either of art or of ritual.

The second of the three chief distinctions between ritual and drama is closely akin to the first. All the events on the stage must be a mere pretence. One can imagine that the "Suffragettes" might have acted in *Votes for Women*, and drawn the crowd, and yet the actual incidents in the play might have been purely fictitious. So a totally distinct characteristic of stage plays is that what happens is understood to be a pretence. As an actual fact nobody is dying, no one is stealing, no one's heart is breaking. It is even preferable, so far as the purposes and principles of art are concerned, that exactly such an event never did happen. Indeed, even so much truth and reality in the event as is involved in its being an exact reflection of what once took place is so far a deviation from the character of pure drama and is such an approach to ritual as to detract from its beauty and to produce an uncanny sense of incongruity. The result is that, in proportion as historic events are reproduced in dramatic form, an attempt is made to bring the representation in the public mind not under the head of drama but under that of ritual, or to find a separate name for it. In the recent celebrations of historic towns in England the ceremonies have been called pageants, and as many elements of realism as possible have been introduced. For instance, one cannot imagine that a pageant

of Oxford should be performed in Paddington or Camberwell. Yet if it were really drama, it could be performed anywhere. Nor can anyone imagine that the pageantry of Oxford should have been enacted wholly by persons from Liverpool or Southampton. As the original characters were not at hand to take part as they would have done in a complete ritual, their possible descendants, at least those familiar with the same streets and the same scenes, represented them. Indeed, it is quite clear to anyone who has been impressed by a pageant, that its elements of realism so outweigh the mere attractions of the fine arts that the ceremony must be classed with ritual and not with stage plays. Ritual is not a show performance but an event—symbolical, but fraught with great ideas. And such is the strange hold of actuality upon the imagination that even identity of locality and any sort of kinship of the actors with the original characters and an approximate fidelity to the events and costumes of the time depicted change the performance into something of ritual.

In Church ritual no deed done is at all a stage performance ; it is the original. Not only are those who officiate, actually, legally the persons holding the office which they seem to hold, but they are positively doing the things they seem to do.

The third point of difference between ritual and the drama is that in the former all the materials used are exactly what they pretend to be. If it is not so, an offence is committed against the fundamental principle of ritual. It is permissible that an actor on the stage personating a monk and imitating the celebration of the Mass should wear a wig to produce the appearance of a tonsure. But we cannot imagine that in a true ritual a real priest, actually celebrating Mass, should put on such a headgear.

We require that his head shall not only seem to be but shall be shaven. This principle of realism applies to all the articles used, beginning with the church itself. On a stage, for the purposes of a play, a cathedral may consist of a wooden frame and painted canvas to imitate stone and arches. But the cathedral itself, where a ritual is performed, is actually built of stone shaped into arches. Any sort of a made-up structure may serve for a pretended pulpit in a play ; but the pulpit in a church must be what it appears. Even the details of the dress must be made of the genuine stuffs and substances which they look to be. The embroideries, the gems, the gold are verily embroideries, gems, and gold. Any mere tinsel would be out of place. Whereas on the stage, for the actors to wear crowns really made of gold were to distract instead of concentrating the attention upon the true art and nature of the performance. In a play on the stage there may be a meal, where the bread and wine are not bread and wine. But it were a scandal in church to introduce substitutes in this manner. In Wagner's *Parsifal* there is the scene of the Communion of the Lord's Supper where the Holy Grail glows with the wine-like light of what seems the actual blood of Christ. It is far more impressive as dramatic art than anything in any actual celebration of Communion. But if a wine-coloured light ever emanates from a chalice on the Communion-table, it must be that the light is actually passing through the real wine.

Not only devout worshippers but every honest man would be horrified to hear that any celebrant of any religious service had in the least particular introduced any merely dramatic effect. It is important to bring home vividly this aspect of the realism of ritual. To do so, let me ask the reader to contrast a burial service

upon the stage with a real burial service in a church. It is not only that in the latter the mourners are the real persons and the ceremony an actual deed of homage to the departed ; but his dead body is verily in the coffin. If one hears or knows that in the coffin on the stage there is nothing of the sort—it is empty or filled with stones—no offence is given. But suppose the whisper went through the congregation at a burial service that the coffin was empty, how could one explain the moral resentment which would be felt, except on the principle that ritual is never a mere formality ? On the stage, without offence, we often see a woman carrying in her arms what purports to be an infant child, while we know that there is nothing of the sort there. But it is hard to conceive the consternation that would ensue, were the priest in church to discover that he was baptising not a live baby but a rag doll. Yet why, if ritual is even remotely akin to theatrical performance ?

Perhaps, if we turn from religious to political ritual, we shall more keenly realise the unjust prejudice against ritual which inclines to dub it theatrical. Suppose Parliament is to be opened by the King and Queen. It is unthinkable that any substitutes should be found to perform their parts. It is inconceivable that the ceremony should take place, when there was not actually to be an opening of Parliament. It would be shocking to our sense of the dignity of the kingdom that the crowns worn should be gilt paper and the jewels paste. A pantomime at Drury Lane is as far removed from the spectacle of an actual royal ceremony as is fiction from reality and fancy from fact. An American who may have seen hundreds of pretence kings and queens in theatres longs to see the real King and Queen of England, for there is a whole world of difference between the theatrical

and the ceremonial. Yet the King and Queen are by ritual king and queen. They are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual social function and relation.

I have said enough to prove that acts of ritual are deeds in real life. But how, then, do they differ from other deeds which are not ritual? In the first place simply in this, that they are symbolical, and by means of arbitrary agreement effect mighty moral and social changes of individuals in their relation to the surrounding community. In ritual outside of religion, the difference between ordinary acts of life and ritual is not so strikingly conspicuous, and the two blend in such a manner that we scarcely are aware when we pass from the one to the other. But religious ritual differs from the rest of life, ritualistic or not, by so much as religion differs from other spheres of human interest and activity. Now it is to be remembered that religion, as we have seen, deals with what are believed to be the supreme concerns of life. It is a turning of the attention to the ultimate source of life's highest blessings, in order to gain them. The dignity of religious ritual differs, then, from the dignity of political, commercial, or merely drawing-room ritual by the superiority of the relations of which religion treats. Here, of course, I assume that persons do believe in the worth of religion. But in cases where they do not, the same principle is illustrated. Their bitter hatred of religious forms and ceremonies cannot be because form and ceremony in itself is pernicious or is an empty nothing, but because they count religion to be hostile to human interests. They dread the ends religion has in view, and therefore they hate these potent means by which the ends are achieved. In the same way, those persons who do not hate but have a

patronising contempt for religious ritual simply transfer their contempt for religion to its forms. Such adverse critics, however, if they were logical and practical, would be compelled to concede that the vanity or the positive evil of religious ceremonial casts no discredit whatever upon ritual in general.

I have given this elaborate analysis because, as it seems to me, ninety-nine persons out of a hundred who hold my fundamental views in regard to the principles of ethics, religion and politics, incline to disbelieve in ritual altogether. Having turned from the forms and ceremonies of supernatural religion, they are filled with horror at the very suggestion that the new ideas of naturalism, social democracy and national idealism must concrete themselves "into a cultus, a fraternity, with assemblings and holy days, with song and book, with brick and stone." They fail to see that in order to counteract the influence of Rome it is necessary to set up a ritual of Reason. They are not ashamed to declare a distaste for any and every sort of religious ceremonial. But in assuming such an attitude, if my analysis be correct, they are doing nothing less than refusing to naturalism, democracy, and national idealism a system of signs by which personal responsibilities might be announced and established among the many. They are unwittingly robbing humanism of indispensable organs, and reducing it to the most beggarly and inarticulate means of actualising its ideal throughout the community.

Fortunately, these opponents of outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace are not so ruthlessly logical as to abandon all use of human speech. They would permit persons who have discarded supernaturalism to reason and argue, and, if possible, be eloquent in public speeches, pamphlets and books. But

nobody must wear a garment which shall stand to the community as a sign that he who wears it is one who repudiates supernaturalism, miracles, presumptions of an aristocratic priesthood and the like. Yet let us suppose that in London alone there were five hundred men and women devoting their lives to the spread of democratic and naturalistic religion. Think what an easy means of propaganda it would be that these persons, wherever they went, should wear a dress as distinctive as that of the Salvation Army workers, with the words printed on their caps and bonnets, "Democracy in Religion," "Naturalism in Religion!" Such signs would challenge more attention than could be gained by a hundred times as much labour and cost in any other one direction. Suppose, too, that a person—the chosen speaker and preacher, let us say, of an ethical society—should wear, when preaching, a robe selected and sanctioned by the society as the distinctive garb for its official preacher. Is it wrong to think that instantly at a meeting where the speaker wore such a symbolic dress, the impression made upon every attendant as to the earnestness and strength of conviction of the members of ethical societies would be a thousand times stronger than if the man merely appeared in his everyday clothes? It must not be forgotten that even those everyday clothes are a symbol. If he is a working man, his dress will betray it. If he is well-to-do, immediately, without his saying a word and without his wishing it, his dress shows his social position and suggests the size of his tailor's bill. These matters, taken at their lowest, are distractions. An ethical preacher should appear not as a man of this or that birth or ancestry or family connection or means of livelihood, but simply as a teacher—as one enough respected to have been selected

as a preacher of social duties and an inspirer of moral enthusiasms.

The prejudice against so subordinate a sign in religious ritual as dress naturally extends its censure to the adoption of any conspicuous signs to indicate the great events of life from the point of view of social idealism. It would seem to me that the greatest service which any little group of ethical idealists could render in our times would be to concentrate themselves upon the elaboration of a ritual which would adequately express their new thought.

In the past, religious ceremonies, being anti-democratic, unscientific, and occult, have strangled liberty and intellectual honesty. They have overpowered the imagination of the people, and allured them into willing subjection to human and superhuman masters. But the worst of all their effects has been this unthinking and bitter hatred and distrust aroused in naturalists and democrats for any and every form of religious ritual. Until this distrust is removed, science and social democracy can never throw off princely and priestly domination and the superstitious authority of invisible agencies. Until a ritualistic religion be constructed on the basis of science and democracy, science and democracy will be almost exclusively confined to the domain of material wealth and politics. They will be occupied with the machinery instead of the dynamics of social justice. They will fail in the supreme art of generating the enthusiasm and guiding the loyalty of the masses of the people.

I have attempted as far as possible to dissociate ritual from the fine arts, and have implied that the fine arts shall be introduced into it only in order that no æsthetic deficiency may offend the community and thus alienate minds highly cultivated in taste. But this problem of the relation of the fine arts to ritual is extremely com-

plex, and therefore one aspect after another must be dealt with.

In the first place, it is essential that a church service shall be conducted as far as possible by persons whose speech and bearing conform to the best standards of the nation. And in general those who attain the distinction of becoming teachers and preachers of national idealism have had opportunity of social refinements. Let us concede, then, that no offence should be given to the conventional standards of manners in the conducting of any ritual.

As for singing and instrumental music in church services, they must never be primarily for æsthetic delight. The compositions must be restricted to that class which produce emotions akin to those produced by the ideals of social righteousness and by the responsibilities of social duty. Certain tone-compositions do undoubtedly arouse an enthusiasm and dignified calm allied to ethical awe and admiration. The Roman Catholic Church has rightly recognised of late the necessity of banishing from the Church services forms of music which are not strictly subordinate to the ends which religion serves. It is conceivable that the Church might give music so beautiful that many would attend for the æsthetic treat. But that this should be the object of the Church is inconceivable, or that she should even perfect her music in order to allure by the æsthetic delight procurable from it. Her music, however perfect, must be so subordinate to and so permeated with her dominating idea that it will inevitably direct attention to her principles and create an emotional state receptive and favourable to them. It should be so winning in its plea for that which is higher than itself that the ungodly will keep away in fear of being converted.

Literary art in the Church must always be the highest which the nation can procure. Persons of literary attainment must not take offence on this score and find excuse for staying away. True literary perfection, moreover, meaning simplicity, directness and dignity of speech, is always the most powerful means of reaching the ear and soul of the less educated. But it must never be forgotten that in a community where taste for it is not highly developed, mere style is by no means essential to the communication of ideas and principles of character. In childhood most persons learn the rules by which they live for the rest of their life from mothers and fathers who speak ungrammatically and whose utterances never pretend to assume the form of connected discourse. It is the veriest pedantry that would identify the power of preaching with eloquence or oratory as we know these in the art of Edmund Burke or of the famous speakers of classic antiquity. Almost incoherently a man may blunder out the message of Christianity, and yet its essence will not be lost nor fail of its work.

Architecture as an element in ritual may be of the most primitive kind and yet powerfully effective. As the service is inside the building, the effect is almost entirely due to the interior. As the right proportions and colours of a room are independent of its exterior, isolated church edifices are altogether a costly extravagance, so far as concerns the spiritual atmosphere of the church service. With architecture, even more essential than its actual art-merit is its association in the mind of the worshippers with the exclusive objects and work of religion ; but as all education ought to be religious, every school and university should contain a chapel and every church building should contain school rooms and lecture halls.

Paintings and sculptures may assist mightily as symbols

of religion, but as symbols rather than as art. They must give no æsthetic offence.

By universal consent, ritual is more intimately identified, as we have seen, in the mind of the general public, with drama than with any other art. The reason is quite plain. Acting is a pretence of action; ritual is action. And generally it is action comparatively dignified, graceful, and effective. Acting also is symbolic action; unlike ritual, however, it symbolises not some real change in social relation and function in the life of the actor himself, but simply some universal and general truth or principle. Yet the fact that it is symbolic action brings it into close line with the action of ritual. Now, the priest, in order to reach the altar or the pulpit, must walk. In this he does the same kind of thing that the actor must do to pass from one part of the stage to another. Yet the priest's act is no more acting in this case than is the movement of any human being from one point to another whither his social duty calls him. The priest must turn and speak to the audience, and in a manner far removed from that kind of speech familiar in ordinary conversation. Again, although he is not acting, what he does is parallel to the actor's art. The priest, addressing a whole assembly, naturally and rightly uses gesture more than would prevail in private conversation; and again he resembles the actor. He may lift his hands in benediction, he may make the sign of the Cross, he may kneel; again, action. And to the persons in the congregation who have never been in his position his actions assume a distinction not felt in those commonly done by everyone. Inevitably, also, persons going through actions in the presence of a public assembly are compelled more or less to conventionalise their motions. They may not study for effect upon the congregation, and yet instinctively they

will learn the art which the actor on the stage in the same way learns.

Thus it comes about that, while ritual is actual life and the stage drama is not, nevertheless the actual life of ritual does become penetrated with the qualities of all the fine arts. Ritual, indeed, as found in the most elaborated Church ceremonials may contain a combination of all the arts which any stage could exhibit, and accordingly may produce the effects of drama without itself being drama. The real secret of its dignity and majesty will be its inward truth, its subjective realism, the fact that the actor is what he personates, that the deed is an actual event in the life of those who participate in it, and that all the circumstances of the occasion are in fact precisely as they are set forth to be. This subjective kind of truth is so potent in enhancing beauty that in ritual a thousand accessories of the various arts may be lacking, coarse may be the materials that affront the eye, defective the proportions of the building, harsh the voices of the ministrant and the singers, awkward the postures and gestures of the celebrants—all these details falling far below the trappings of the stage—and yet

> how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
> By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

In ritual we become aware that art and life together are more than art alone.

In the light of the foregoing analysis it will be seen that the person errs egregiously who says that those who are naturalistic in religion can never hope to elaborate a ritual splendid enough to compete with the stained-glass windows, the organs and orchestras, the variegated marbles, the embroidered and bedizened vestments, and the "long-drawn aisle and fretted vault," such as allure

the senses in the scenes of Romish ceremony ; and that therefore they ought not to attempt to construct and practise a ritual which shall embody their own ideas. One may not say : "When we want the strength and comfort of ritual, let us go to Roman cathedrals or Anglican abbeys ; but when we are true to our own religious principles, let it suffice us to argue and debate and make speeches."

To do the latter is quite wise, and to abstain from a ritual of our own may perhaps be temporarily thrust upon us by circumstances. But that those who have discarded supernaturalism should enter sympathetically into a ritual which must be interpreted supernaturalistically or have no significance at all, is a moral and psychological impossibility. If the spectator of a Romish ritual has no faith in supernatural agencies, all its mere art sinks infinitely below the level of a good play on the stage. For in a good play what is represented is always human nature, the besieging realities of everyday suffering and hope, human principles and human ideals. The art of the theatre is good when it is true to life in general. But of what universal reality is the Romish ritual, as it is interpreted by the supernaturalist in religion, a sign and token to the naturalist ? Of nothing. The practice of the Mass, to have any meaning, must be interpreted as the outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace which is being communicated from a supernatural source. Now if a man has with a whole soul's protest abandoned communion with any supernatural agents whatsoever, how can he yield himself for spiritual strength and solace to a sign to him signifying nothing ? In proportion, therefore, as through the Romish ritual their senses are stormed by the idea which underlies it, the whole spirit of rational idealists must rise up in armed defence, as to beat off a

mortal enemy. Suppose a man's whole life is animated by the principle embodied in Emerson's injunction, "Trust thyself!" how can he yield his mind to a ritual which insinuates into the very arteries and tissues of the devotee an absolute moral self-distrust? All that the believer in democracy and the law of cause and effect counts a spiritual menace is transformed by Rome into loveliness and majestic mien. If he submits to it, it stands smiling before his eyes, it sings blinding sweet into his ear, strokes with warm, soft touch his hand, exhales fragrance into the air he breathes, until, soothed into oblivion of his moral selfhood, he falls entranced and is henceforth Rome's, to do with as she wills. Behold what power an idea, although an insult to our manhood and an enemy to knowledge and spiritual self-control, may have over us when it is concreted into a cultus, if only we are unwary enough to submit to it!

Unless fully convinced that that which it symbolises is the very life of life, no one except a degenerate, a sickly gratifier of sensations for the sake of pleasure, would yield his senses to any ritual. To participate in a ritual for enjoyment's sake or for beauty's sake is morally an abomination. It disintegrates the mental fibre. To amuse oneself with ritual is to play with fire. Only when that which the ritual bodies forth is believed to be the source of life, and therefore is accepted by a man as his redemption and his God, does it make him manly. Then it renders him invincible. But only then does it assuage appetite and purify the passions by rendering more real, powerful, vivid, and intimate than appetite, the sacrifice of self for the good of all.

Such being the psychology of ritual, it follows inevitably that to a democratic and scientifically trained mind the meagrest beginnings of a ritual consonant with his

principles would have more meaning and communicate more strength and peace than the most perfect and beautiful ritual conceivable, the principles of which he counted false and pernicious. A ritual is an outward and visible sign ; and if the thing it signifies is worse than nothing, no incidental accompaniments lent by the fine arts can give it vigour or even beauty. And indeed it will be found that really manly devotees of the new views of the universe and of man's responsibility are not allured by the splendours of any supernaturalistic ceremonial. The persons who do not believe in supernaturalism and yet are allured, are only those who do not believe in anything, and have no idealistic convictions. Such are the lovers of art for art's sake instead of for life's sake. And the real national idealists need only to be convinced of the necessity for a rationalistic ritual in order to encourage the practice of it.

In another sense than that which I have dwelt upon, there is a kinship between the fine arts and ritual. The fine arts themselves are not simply embodiments of pure and universal beauty. Indeed, there are whole schools of artists and philosophers of art who maintain that the essence of art is not the beautiful in the sense of a form perfect in itself, a manifold variety of parts unified by some inherent principle within them all. A flower is beautiful in itself. A sunset, a landscape is beautiful within itself. A human face and the human form may be beautiful in this way. But there is also such a thing as the expression of a meaning which transcends the form itself. A form may point to a unity and variety beyond itself. A human face not beautiful in form may be expressive of a type of character transcendently beautiful and harmonious in itself. There is an irradiation of the soul from within, which transfigures faces by no means

comely in themselves. Such a face is, as it were, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, and not the revelation of a charm of its own, as is the case with absolute and perfect beauty. The purely artistic sense of beauty rests in the self-revelation of the concrete object presented in colour before the eye, or in tone-structure through the ear. But an artist may be more than an artist; without degrading his art he may add to this pure beauty an extra charm, in that the outward form becomes a sign of a moral meaning.

A public far from appreciating pure beauty may be swayed and moved to admiration by every hint of higher meaning. Thus it comes about that symbolism is rife in certain schools of art; and in so far their art is allied to ritual. Signs are chosen of which they know the public will understand the inner meaning. They know that the mind of the beholder will instantly pass from the sign to the meaning, and that the meaning once astir in his mind will arouse all the emotions with which it has hitherto been associated. Artists thus appeal to the patriotic emotions, to reverence for children, to respect for motherhood, to admiration for martyrs. What is called the literary value of a picture is often the only element commendable in it. And yet, to the indignation of the pure artist, it may be so powerful that the whole community laud it to the skies as beautiful; and the maker of it is counted a master in his craft. Take an object with absolutely no beauty of form whatever, like the Union Jack or the American Stars and Stripes, and not even men of the most disciplined judgment can in the moment of patriotic emotion fail to see these purely arbitrary signs as objects in themselves grateful to behold.

Religious symbolism is in so far art, as the mere use of an outward act or colour or shape of any object arbitrarily

selected to stand for some invisible reality may be called art. And many do so call it, but possibly to the detriment of art and to the concealment of the real nature and power of ritual. Not to call symbolism art is not to deny its astonishing hold upon the imagination, and through it upon the intellect, the emotions and the will. This effect of ritual is incalculably great. And if the thing symbolised is a thing to which we count it well that a man should turn his admiring attention, because the effect upon him is beneficent, we are grateful for the instrumentality which achieves it. But if the effect is one we deplore, we hate the means. The power of ritual, however, is undeniable. "The effect," says Mr Lowes Dickinson in his essay entitled *Religion : A Criticism and a Forecast*, "even of a ritual which we do not understand, or one with the intellectual basis of which we are out of touch, may be immense upon a sensitive spirit. How much more that of one which should really and adequately express our conviction and feeling about life and the world ! For those who can accept the Christian view, the Christian ritual must be their most precious possession ; but for those who cannot—and they are, as I think, an increasing number of not the least religious souls—their lack of intellectual assent to the faith weakens or even nullifies the effect of the symbol. And if, as I think will be the case, the men in whom the religious instinct is strongest move farther and farther from the Christian postulates, a ritual which shall express their new attitude will become, perhaps is already, one of their chief spiritual needs."

Unluckily for the new humanism, very few of those who accept its postulates, however much they need a ritual which shall express their new attitude, consciously want it. It would seem that with most of them the

exclusive association of ritual with ideas they count pernicious will never be removed until they actually have an object-lesson in the new ritual. Hence the necessity that the pioneers of that religion which Mr Lowes Dickinson forecasts should group themselves together and establish "a cultus, a fraternity, with assemblings and holy days, with song and book, with brick and stone." The world must receive ocular and oral demonstration before it will believe that the new attitude can be made concrete to the senses.

It is a little strange that persons who boast themselves free to think upon religious subjects should entertain a horror of ritual on the ground that it charms the senses. In the first place, why should the senses not be charmed? Can we afford to leave them to be corrupted by unscrupulous, unpatriotic, money-making syndicates who pander to the senses instead of purifying them? Or shall we become rank puritans, who not only want no beauty in outward form but would banish even symbolic expressions of inward meanings? When we remember what symbolism is, furthermore, we shall realise that the appeal is never *to* the senses, but only *through* them. Further be it remembered, that all the wiser, more efficient and humane methods of education embody the principle of communicating abstract ideas through signs, symbols and associations which through the senses suggest the unseen.

Probably underlying the strong opposition of rationalistic religionists to ritual is the notion that any appeal to the senses is not quite fair and honest. An appeal should be made only to the reason and judgment of a man whom one is attempting to convert and to interest in any system of religion. If you allure through the senses, it is asked, have you not abandoned the fundamental principle of

rationalism, and resorted to the very means which have caused the revolt of men of intellectual integrity against the old cults? Yet now you come in with a new appeal to the senses. You hope to win men by indirect methods. You mean to attach them by extraneous and adventitious associations of ideas, instead of by convincing them of the truth of your position. You mean to draw men by the cords not of reason but of emotion, sentiment, and possibly even of self-interest or family attachment or patriotic prejudice. You mean to commit a man first, and then convince him; whereas the rationalist would convince him first, and then there would be no occasion for any systematic effort to commit him.

In meeting this position one notices, in the first place, how it is inspired by a radical suspicion and distrust of a man's whole psychological make-up, except in so far as he is a logical thinker. It emanates from the presupposition that every man must beware not only of the crafts and assaults of priests and fascinating demagogues, but of his own eyes and ears, of the very laws of association of ideas by which the child-mind constructs the chaos of primal sensations into the beauty, order and meaning of a rational cosmos within the forms of space and time. For the first three years of a child's life the power to think logically is not only not self-conscious, it is not even regulative. The confused materials of the sensations of touch and sight and sound build themselves up into windows, chairs, and human faces solely by means of frequency of repetition of appearance in the same associations. No psychologist denies that it is by seeing a certain shape and colour often together and then by seeing the colour sometimes with another shape and size, that the child learns to discriminate colour from shape and size. This process is not logical. It is not rational.

There is no question of self-contradiction, although, of course, there is on the other hand no violation of the laws of identity and of difference. There is no question as to whether the shapes, colours and sizes tally with an outside universe or violate some system of abstract thought. We further note that in the child's mind the objects which it grows to discern as distinct and connected become to it also, at the same time, symbols. Scarcely does the mother's face pass from the stage of an undiscerned sensation into a distinct perception but, thanks to the law of association, the child takes a reappearance of that face in perception as an outward and visible sign of the veritable presence of that other reality from which emanate tender care, relief from pain, and the agreeable sensations which the child welcomes. Now, can any rationalist who accepts this psychological process as legitimate in a child find any possible ground for his intense distrust of it in the grown-up man? At what age of adolescence must this process be checked? And if it be not pernicious in youth, but, on the contrary, the very pre-requisite of all rationality, how and why does it suddenly lose its beneficence and begin to destroy the very framework and constitution of the rational universe which itself has made, and which reason, after it has appeared, sanctions as altogether good?

What does the ritualist do but imitate that psychological process to which all naturally gifted teachers and all trained experts in education and all philosophic pedagogists turn as the very model and ideal for the teacher's conscious art? For instance, the rationalistic ritualist would say to himself, "In order that a man by the age of twenty-one shall see the full rationality of ethical idealism, I must begin with him when he is only five years of age, to tell him stories which will interest

him quite irrespectively of their ultimate significance in a scheme of religious thought and yet will at the same time illustrate the principles of that thought. But I must tell him such stories not only once a year or once in six months, but every week, and repeat them and have him repeat them. I must draw incidents from history, I must search out analogies in physical nature. Thus years before he can think for himself on abstract questions, he will have been receiving the material, and that material more or less pre-arranged, which will make it easy for him to judge for himself years afterwards." But the rationalistic ritualist will also say, "I want that the child's mind shall associate a particular building and a particular room with the religion which I mean to teach him, so that whenever he thinks of this religion a mental image of the room, its size and colour and arrangements of furniture, shall appear in his mind. All the sensations and emotions associated with that room must be agreeable ; unpleasant feelings will make the man in later years turn from the idea, because it will recall sensations and emotions from which he shrinks instinctively. He must never be forced by threats of punishment to go to the room which is to be identified in his mind with rational religion. When he comes, he must not be compelled to stay longer for a lesson or any systematic work than a child's nature can well endure. The room must not be so cold as to chill the child ; else this physical shrinking will extend even to the thought of what is taught in the room. The people present must be kindly, loving, considerate, and deferential to the child's individuality." And as children love to sing, the ritualist will teach him songs embodying rationalistic sentiments, perfectly sure that the melodies will flow into his mind years afterwards, bearing the words and the words bearing the meaning of the message

which the child could not fully comprehend. And the lights of the room must be bright—and yet not too bright. In short, the place must be like a home ; and everyone knows how a mother and father instinctively, if they are able, provide the comforts which shall make the home physically attractive to every inmate. Indeed, what is a home but a place of comfort and welcome for body and mind ? So the ritualist would go on, putting books into the hands of the child which would lead his thought to those great factors in life which the teacher believes ultimately the child will acknowledge to deserve supreme reverence and devotion. The rationalistic ritualist will let go to waste no agreeable if innocent association of the senses or affections, which might attach the child ultimately to the principles of reason.

Now this of course, so far, is exactly the method of Roman Catholic and Anglican ritualists, who have no faith in reason whatever, but fall back upon conventional tradition as their God. Yet, nevertheless, there is a world-wide difference. There is an absolute antagonism between the rationalistic and the non-rationalistic ritualist, for the latter means never to appeal to reason. He trusts wholly to associations and indirect attachments. He knows how well-nigh impossible it is for most persons at the age of thirty to throw off the mere outward associations of a lifetime. He knows further that, there being no principle of reason at the heart of all the associations which he has been systematically arranging in children's experience, their power to think for themselves will never enable them to discover any law of rationality in the religion given to them. But, still further, he will know that the craving for rationality, not having been stimulated through the growing lifetime of the mind, will have almost died at the root.

What, however, is the position of the rationalistic ritualist? Every year progressively, from the age of five on, he will have been making more frequent and profound appeals to the moral and scientific judgment of the child. He will be passing continually from the concrete to the abstract. But always at each step he will be guiding and challenging the child to judge for himself of what is right and what is wrong, of what is verifiable truth and what is unfounded prejudice; until finally, at the age of eighteen or twenty, the child will have been brought to a height of judgment from which he can survey the widest fields of speculative thought and of moral responsibility. But when the pupil attains this point, all the pleasant associations, all the lovable and tender memories of his lifetime will reinforce his judgment and his reason. He will not suffer the painful sense that the treasure of his heart lies in one direction and the responsibility of duty and integrity in another. He will feel that the principles which now his judgment accepts as right and true have from the first been the providential laws which regulated the full and varied interests of his life from the first.

Is it fair to say that rationalistic ritual betrays reason by alluring the senses? Does not the word "allure" itself beg the question by implying that the senses are so appealed to as to oppose reason?

It must be remembered that many things which are not reason are nevertheless not against reason. For instance, the processes of association, the affections, the craving for agreeable sensations in the child and the man, the love of the approbation of others—these are not the love of a system of thought without contradiction, these are not the craving to reduce all phenomena to unity; but nevertheless they are not against reason.

It is quite possible that a man is only one per cent. reason, and that the other ninety-nine per cent. of him consist of processes and cravings of a totally different kind. If so, what narrowness and inhuman bigotry it is to appeal solely to a child's power to think! Many rationalists make the preposterous blunder, in speaking of appealing to reason, of forgetting that one must always appeal also to sensations, experiences, perceptions, emotions, volitions, as the material which reason is to explain. To think that a child can spin a true religion out of his reason, unrelated to the experience of man throughout history and to the extra-rational parts of man's nature, is a more preposterous superstition than to fall back wholly upon tradition and an external revelation. For reason with no material of experience to work up and to classify is absolutely empty and void.

Not simply in reference to the child whom one has the opportunity of educating is it foolish to trust to reason alone, without a mass of friendly associated ideas. It is downright madness of policy when one expects to overthrow by an appeal merely to reason the entrenched prejudices which for twenty-five years have been systematically built up in the mind of another. What is the use of trying to convince a man that his religion is irrational, when he does not care whether it be rational or not, when he has never been trained from his youth to respect the rational and his capacity both to judge and to respect it has in consequence become atrophied? Suppose, however, one does wish to bring more rational views of religion to the mind of a man trained to believe in the authority of priest and book as final. What is the only possible and the only legitimate method? It may be late in the day to begin, but even at the age

of twenty-five, if a man is to be drawn away from a false system of religion, he must be drawn—in proportion as he has little capacity and in order to develop his capacity for rationality — by bringing about in his mind new agreeable associations with those principles of which at the moment he has scarcely heard. He must be made acquainted with a man of the type of culture and manners and character that he has always loved and respected. Then, although he only incidentally hears that the man is a rationalist, instantly the whole of his attachment to that person will move out in friendly anticipation to the new ideas. He will want to know more of them. He is already, if not prejudiced in their favour, sympathetically curious to be informed. His mind is open. Nothing under heaven could have opened his mind but a preliminary, indirect attachment of this sort. He is astonished, for he had supposed that only persons socially "impossible" ever entertained rationalistic views of religion. He already has discovered one error. "Perhaps," he says to himself, "the ideas themselves are no more gross and crude than this man who entertains them."

Or let it be that there is no question of an individual rationalist meeting an individual traditionalist. Suppose it is a question among rationalists as to what sort of a meeting for the presentation of their ideas they will hold, to which they will invite the general public. From the point of view of the rigorous anti-ritualist and jealous deifier of reason, it will make no difference in what sort of a room the meeting is to be held, whether it be dingy or agreeably lighted, whether it be ugly or beautiful, whether it be too cold or too warm, whether the speaker use good English or violate all the conventional canons of speech, or whether he show refinement of taste and breeding or not.

But the ritualist will say that because of the power of the association of ideas no one of these adventitious circumstances should be allowed to give offence, and that every particular object or event or circumstance that can be used as an outward sign to signify the real character of rationalistic idealism shall be appropriated and used. Indeed, the rationalist himself, if he be a ritualist, will dedicate not only his reasoning but all his other powers to the service of reason. He will be not only ready to die for his cause, not only ready to live for it in the sense of giving his time and risking his reputation and suffering ostracism, but he will resort to less heroic forms of sacrifice. He will dedicate all the minor incidents of life, controlling them so that they shall be no occasion of unnecessary offence or prejudice to any mortal. And this spirit, applied to the meeting to which the public are invited, will cause the elaboration of that meeting into something more than an aggressive attack exposing the self-contradictions and absurdities of the traditionalists. The meeting itself must be an object-lesson to the public, demonstrating that the traditionalists possess no monopoly of any one of the characteristics of their own meetings which they have counted precious and which have drawn the allegiance of the discriminating. Every resource will be called into service—not in imitation but as an absolute necessity to the full and fair presentation of its own inner ideal.

I have dwelt thus long upon the prejudice against ritual entertained by persons who hold fundamental principles like my own, because nearly all the men and women of finest taste and intellectual culture in England who abandon the old interpretations of religion, upon ceasing to attend church and work actively as members in it, never dream of the possibility of entering into fellow-

ship with others of their own newer belief. Yet the reason for this shrinking from new religious co-operation is almost wholly, and is consciously, a shrinking from crudities in methods of propaganda and from the over-emphasis of mere logical appeals to reason, which prevailed in the nineteenth century among so-called rationalists.

There is another and profounder reason for the practice and public celebration of a religious ritual of idealistic humanism. The real enemy of the idealistic humanist, as I have pointed out in the first chapter, is not after all the supernaturalistic religionist. It is the same enemy which, from the first, Christianity and Judaism themselves have so valiantly, however mistakenly, been fighting : the organised world which intelligently and consciously accepts selfishness as the regulative principle of conduct. I recur to this fact again, in order to bring it into connection with the psychological principle of the association of ideas. The child from the age of five, besides any intended and systematic association built up by his religious teachers, is constantly, by his meeting with all sorts and conditions of people and by all sorts and conditions of accidental experience and observation, forming associations which allure him towards the practices of lying, physical self-indulgence, and love of power and display. So that if great care be not taken, by the time he is twenty-one years of age he will have been committed by a thousand habits and desires and by the expectations of others to a life of shrewd, systematic service of himself at the expense of others. One need not even cite the case of the still lower order of intelligences where the self-seeking and self-gratification are neither shrewd nor far-sighted, but there is an effeminate and weak yielding to each momentary impulse. But in either case the moral calamity has come about by a

gradual association of ideas which committed the whole mind to one or the other form of pleasing oneself without consideration of others. How, I ask, can an appeal to reason unsupplemented by an elaborated scheme of counteracting associations ever rescue such individuals and the society into which they are born from the calamity of moral downfall? Ethical ritual, then, really means moral propaganda by methods which a knowledge of psychological processes suggests to every teacher.

But deep and radical is the ordinary rationalist's opposition to outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, even if that grace be the idealism of reason itself. It is maintained among all who oppose ritual, but chiefly by its extremest opponents, the rationalists, that throughout the history of religious organisations the ceremonial has been at enmity with the ethical tendency, and has often extinguished it. This opposition is to be met by challenging both psychologically and historically the truth of the statement that ceremonial in itself tends to check the ethical element in religion. Of course, it goes without saying that an immoral ceremonial will have not moral effects but the very opposite. It also goes without saying that a non-moral ceremonial will have not moral effects but again a very opposite. For the ethical has two opposites, the unethical and the non-ethical; and of the two in the actual history of society and of each individual mind the non-ethical is, as a fact, a greater enemy to the positively ethical than is actual self-conscious wickedness. The diabolically bad is a comparatively small factor in human life compared to apathy, indifference, pre-occupation, interest in the things of the senses and of worldly prosperity. Yet surely, in considering whether ceremonial religion be antagonistic to ethical religion, we must bar out ceremonials non-ethical and anti-ethical,

and ask only whether an ethical religion which resorts to ritual as a means of communicating its principles and enthusiasm is in danger of a suicidal absorption in the details of the ceremonial. Is an ethical religion which resorts to outward signs apt to forget the things signified in its attention to the efficiency of the signs? If it did absorb its attention in the signs so as to make them exquisitely perfect in efficiency, could such a development of symbolism obscure the very grace it was meant to symbolise? Or would the effort to make the signs supremely efficient somehow degenerate without knowing it into making them inefficient? My contention is that there are no psychological processes known to us which would justify our fearing that an ethical ceremonial would so absorb the interest of teachers and preachers and organisers of the ethical life as to induce them to forget the ethical life or to sacrifice it to the ceremonial.

Even if we admitted that all the ceremonials of the past and present did and do militate against the interests of ethical life, we should have also to concede that the grace signified by these ceremonials was not socialistic, not humanistic, not naturalistic. A supernaturalistic ceremonial diverts men from social responsibility and thus injures the ethical life; but not because it is ceremonial but because it is supernaturalistic. In such a ritual the personal agents propitiated are not one's fellow human beings but agents without human bodies, agents not recognised by the law, agents who are not subjects of rights and privileges, and who cannot be punished by public opinion and the criminal law, agents who cannot be made legislators, administrators, or judges. The opponents of ceremonial must point to a purely ethical ritual and show that the ritual has had an unethical or non-ethical effect. But that would be very

difficult to prove. When such an effect is shown, the ceremonial is proved not to have been what at the outset it was assumed to be.

With the spiritistic rituals of the churches of the past one must contrast a humanistic, socialistic, naturalistic ritual. And one must not attribute to ritual in itself any evil effect of the old rituals which can be traced directly to the spiritistic presuppositions out of which it has grown.

But to be just to the rituals of Judaism and Christianity we must admit that they are essentially ethical rituals. The real problem before us is not Jewish and Christian rituals *versus* ethical rituals. The problem is to decide between two ethical rituals, the one spiritistic and the other socialistic.

Judaism and Christianity are spiritistic ethical religions. They are, as I believe, vitiated to a great extent by their spiritism. But despite these vitiating elements they are superbly ethical. The result is that their rituals are very great and good ethically; and, as compared with no ritual and no ethical religion, they are infinitely precious. What is more, when we turn to the facts of Jewish and Christian church discipline, a comparison of the more and the less ritualistic communions by no means confirms the statement that ritual militates against the ethical life. On the contrary, where there is most ritual there is also the most intense ethical enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. It is true that the spiritistic element increases in efficiency with the ritual; but the ethical element increases proportionately and holds its own against the non-ethical and anti-ethical effects of the spiritistic error. We find, for instance, in England that the High Churchmen who seem to spend a great proportion of time and thought upon details of ritual are as a direct effect of that ceremonial

so heightened in enthusiasm of self-sacrifice for the poor that they stand an object of moral admiration to persons of all religions and of no religion. It must be further remembered that the Roman Catholic Church by its very ritual has created such domination and ascendency of the idea of sacrifice for the poor that it stands to this hour pre-eminent for its charities, its consolations to the lonely and the suffering, and its attention to the education of its children. What we do find is the aloofness both of Protestant churches and of the Roman Catholic communion from national and municipal politics, from the modern interests of science and art, and from the whole movement of women and the working people for economic emancipation. But the spiritism at the heart of Christian dogma as it has hitherto been interpreted is quite enough to account for this aloofness. The trust of Christianity has thus far been in supernatural agencies, outside the political organism. Its supreme interest for a thousand years has been in a world beyond death. The fact that despite this moral aberration it still has been so intensely ethical in its discipline upon the human soul is one of the strongest proofs that notwithstanding its dogma its supreme passion was human righteousness. Even within the sphere of individual ethics we see the adverse influence of its spiritism. This spiritism, not being verifiable in experience, has caused the churches, if not positively to discourage, at least to overlook the claims of intellectual honesty and of bold, free investigation of truth. But the ritualism is in no wise to blame for these deficiencies.

Even when we investigate the ceremonial and ethical aspects of Judaism we find that the ceremonial has been a tremendous aid to the moral character of the Jews and a strengthening of the Jewish race such as has made it

a two thousand years' wonder to all the races of the world. We must remember that the Temple service as illustrated in the Psalms was that of the second Temple. The people had lost their political independence. The ruling classes had been banished for seventy years in the Babylonian Exile. There the greatest of the ethical prophets, Ezekiel, not excelled by Isaiah in moral insight and passion, was statesman enough to see that with the political independence gone, a psychological substitute must be found which would focus the people's hope and confidence upon those lines of conduct which in the end lead to national independence and prosperity. He hit upon the notion of a splendid Temple ritual as the means of focussing steadfastly and reverently the whole people's heart and will upon the supreme means of the ultimate blessings of life. It was ritual, it was ceremonial, it was a system of signs for inward and ethical tribal grace, that kept the Jews from 432 B.C. until 70 A.D. from losing their national idealism, and has preserved them to this day not without hope, and now at last has brought the establishment of a Jewish kingdom nearer to the domain of practical politics than it has been for two thousand years.

Take the elements of ceremonial as contrasted with the ethical life of social justice. It will be plainly seen that if the ceremonial aim at social justice it cannot but prove the most powerful ally conceivable of the teaching and preaching of morality, of discipline, of the sanction of public opinion, and of the moral atmosphere of a community where social justice is practised and illustrated.

Ceremonial religion involves the keeping of holy days, because the community must agree upon times of ceremonial worship. Now in modern life one of the greatest questions dividing the ordinary rationalist from

the traditionalist in religion is this one of keeping the Sabbath Day holy. Says the rationalist, "All days are holy." Says the traditional ritualist, "Sunday must be kept sacred to religion irrespective of reasons of social expediency." But now comes into the argument the rationalistic ritualist. He maintains that one day in seven is needed for ethical meditation, concentration, and commitment; that a day must be set apart and kept holy, guarded against the inroads and encroachments of sport and athletics, art, and mere intellectual science. Is it conceivable that a whole nation devoting one day in seven to the problems and principles and policy of social justice should not thereby advance ethically in ten years to a moral stage which otherwise they could scarcely attain in a thousand years? An ethical Sabbath would be the most powerful moral asset conceivable for a nation, if its ethics were based upon science and social democracy instead of upon unverifiable dogmas devised to secure trust in invisible agencies beyond society.

And when you have secured the ethical holy day there must be the assemblings. In these assemblies every available sign must be utilised to make real in presence and power the claims of the national ideal. There must be song and book. And the necessity of housing the multitudes means a temple building.

A disproof of the utility of an ethical ritual would require a demonstration that a nation's attention will be fixed upon the ends and means of social justice without any effort of statesmen. Or, if not this, it will require a demonstration that men and women will be as ethical if they do not pay attention to the means and ends of social justice, as if they do. But neither of these attitudes can be defended. Grown men will not spontaneously attend even so much as children to the claims of social justice,

unless their minds be systematically turned thereto. Nor is there any evidence to justify the belief that people would do right, if the right were never taught them.

The senses of every human being are incessantly solicited by those objects which in closer proximity would gratify natural instincts and impulses. These objects, presenting themselves to the senses, carry with them an overpowering feeling of their reality. The problem of the ethical teacher is, how to give a corresponding impression of reality to the claims of duty, the invisible laws of the universe, and the ideals and visions of a perfect order of society. How can these be made as impressive, present, and immediate, as the visible and audible world of the senses? There is only one way. If their reality is to be brought home to people, and their force is to become dominant and master appetites, ambitions and vanities, we must find outward, visible and audible signs which shall instantly, by the marvellous working of the law of association, suggest powerfully to the imagination their presence and reality. The universal, the ideal, the moral order, the state of things which ought to be but is not yet, the great ends of society—all these, prefigured in the constitution of man but not actualised in his daily life and institutions, can be by means of outward signs so vividly suggested as to create a mystic sense of their real presence. It is the function of symbolism, through the eye, the ear, and the other senses, thus to bring home the reality of the super-sensible world, *i.e.*, the world of ideals, of principles, of types and tendencies, of universal conceptions of humanity, of visions of the perfect city, the true State and the honest man. If these did not possess by divine right validity and necessity and binding power, it would be an unpardonable playing with the mind of another to create such an impression by ritual.

It would be scarcely less than black art to attempt by some outward and palpable sign to secure for them the sense of reality. But according to reason and in the moral judgment these super-sensible things are the supreme realities. Were we not deceived and ensnared by the false claims of objects which obtrude themselves upon the senses by appealing to purely physical instincts and impulses, we should never for a moment doubt the reality of the fundamental order of nature and the universal principles and standards of right reason. But because of the obtrusiveness of objects of the senses and because of the devices and intrigues of cunning and unscrupulous human beings, every man is in danger of forgetting the claims of duty and the remote consequences of present deeds. To bring the future as powerfully before the mind as is the present, to obtrude the claims of persons unknown as intensely as those obtrude their own who clamour upon their knees before us—to do this is impossible except as the future, the absent, the invisible, the super-sensible, the moral order, are represented by signs or counters or marks which will not let us forget that they stand before our very eyes and ears as the proxies of those realities which are invisible. The power and claim of what we aspire to be in our moments of selfless meditation are apt to be overlooked by the busy, the inexperienced, the thoughtless, the perplexed. Only ritual can find for the super-sensible order a foothold in the world of sense upon which it may plead for the higher ends of life.

But there is still another form which the objection to ritual assumes in the minds of those who have turned away from supernaturalistic ceremonials. These persons are apt to retort, not without great plausibility: "What need has an ethical idealism for outward signs? Let

every deed of daily conduct speak for our religion. Let our deeds testify to our principles. For those whose religion is a cult of the supernatural, there may be occasion for symbolic acts, like the making of the sign of the Cross in the air, like the partaking of a meal that is not a real meal, and the like ; but for us whose religion is ethical, not a minute of the day passes that does not give us a chance of illustrating the ideas by which we live." This is all very beautiful in motive, but, if I am not in error, it is wholly a mistake. It is not as a fact true that specific deeds of duty reveal the principles, dispositions, motives, presuppositions, and ideals which animate them. The spectator will interpret any deed of human kindness or mercy or justice done by another in the light of the principles which would animate him if he were to do the deed. A spectator will attribute an act in another to motives which would have prompted him, had he performed it. Our deeds are not self-revealing as to their inmost secret. You cannot discover from a man's giving a cup of cold water to a dying neighbour whether he acted from a Mohammedan, Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Agnostic, or Mystic view of duty and the world. Our deeds do not point unequivocally to our principles—except to our own introspective observation. Our deeds point, on the contrary, to each spectator's own principles which might have produced them. If a man works among the poor as a philanthropist in a neighbourhood where hitherto only devout Christians have done so, every act of his will be interpreted by the neighbourhood as being done in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ—or for whatever motive is customarily assigned to Christian philanthropists. If a Jew go and his face does not betray his race, all the neighbours will draw the inference

that he is working as a disciple of Christ. If an Agnostic humanist do the same, not a living mortal can infer his "heresy" from his deeds. Or suppose a modern Western humanist was kind to some suffering dumb animal and was assisted by a Japanese in delivering the creature from acute pain. How could any bystander detect that the European's deed emanated from a direct love for all sentient beings, while the Japanese was but illustrating his belief that some ancestor might be incarnate in the cat or dog and that on that account it should be relieved from pain? What possible difference in the deed of mercy could be detected which would cause the European's act to point to humanism and that of the Japanese to spiritistic ancestor-worship? It becomes quite clear that if you wish to uncover your motives, ideas, doctrines or creed, you must resort to the practice of symbolic acts arbitrarily chosen and understood to signify adherence to exactly those ideas and doctrines. The only alternative to symbolic acts is simply talking. With one's lips one must declare oneself Agnostic, Buddhist, Mohammedan; or else one must undergo some ceremonial act. And indeed, even the declaration with one's lips, if hunted down, is found to be an arbitrary sign, outward and audible, for an inward and spiritual truth. The community agrees that a man who declares himself a Roman Catholic is a Roman Catholic. By making that sign he actually throws in the weight of his influence on the side of Catholicism. Therefore to the community at large the public profession of faith with the lips is a symbolic deed which pledges a man. To know that a man is a Roman Catholic one requires at least this sign that he has participated in some rite or other distinctive of that communion.

I may have succeeded in convincing some readers that

such a thing as an ethical and naturalistic ritual is not only right but necessary as a means to ethical propaganda and to the building up of a steadfast and enthusiastic national love of righteousness.

Still I have reason to think that many who would concede thus much would yet adhere to the prevalent opinion that nothing but a belief in supernatural powers could create in a religious assembly what is called a spiritual atmosphere. Yet it is the creation of just such a spiritual atmosphere, in which one is filled with a sense of the infinite and of the super-sensible and of the reality of an unseen universe, which I shall try to demonstrate is the work which a naturalistic ritual of national idealism is pre-eminently fitted to perform.

What is after all the most sublime Reality, the supreme spiritual Power, in response to which the individual human heart and will could vibrate? I say without a moment's hesitation, it is the living principle of social righteousness, the ideal will of a community of human beings. Whoever surrenders himself to the good of the community and to the cause of the good in the world as it is organising, guiding and inspiring the lives of a group of brave men and women, knows that he is experiencing that which is the Absolute Reality for the rational will of every finite soul. As he reads the account of devout and religious men of every creed, however supernaturalistic, he sees that what they are describing as God is the reality which he himself has found and by which he lives. In terms of psychology and sociology he may describe it simply as the spirit of humanity or the general will of the community; but, however tamely and pedantically he thus designates it, he knows it and loves it as the Consoler, the Inspirer, the Saviour.

In a religious meeting where there is no thought of

personal agencies outside of the spiritual organism of human society, every individual person may be flooded and thrilled and transfigured in the sense of the glory and power and dignity and presence of the spiritual organism in which he lives and moves and has his being and to which he gladly surrenders himself. In such a meeting of idealistic humanists one may feel his own private wish and desire merging and growing into the mighty creative will of organised humanity. If it is a man's first experience of this spiritual event, he forthwith undergoes what is called religious conversion. If, despite former experience and a full knowledge of its meaning and blessing, he has been living a life of base and abject subservience to pettier and lower interests, he will be filled with remorse and suffer the pain of cleansing fire. In a meeting where all present are filled with one idea, and that a great and humane one, where all are moved by one purpose and each is conscious of his own responsible contribution towards its fulfilment, not the veriest scoffer, not the most hardened sinner, can escape the sense of the reality of a Power not himself that makes for righteousness.

> The tidal wave of deeper souls
> Into our inmost being rolls,
> And lifts us unawares
> Out of all meaner cares.

There may be those who have not so much even as heard that the higher will, the combined effort, of many in the cause of humanity is a Holy Spirit. Much less may they have heard the claim here made for it that it is *the* Holy Spirit, the same reality revealed to the world and rightly named by the early Christians who discovered it in that first losing and finding of themselves in their combined effort to spread the teachings of the Gospel.

Now there may possibly be reasons why this spirit of a group of human beings bound in devotion to the moral ideal should not be called God or the Holy Ghost. But it is hard to see on that account why any human being, whether professedly Christian or not, should deny himself the ineffable blessing of being filled, cleansed, and strengthened by its power. If we analyse, from a sociological and psychological point of view, what produces the spiritual atmosphere in the meetings of supernaturalistic churches, we shall always find humanistic factors which adequately account for every spiritual phenomenon testified to by supernaturalists.

In the first place, not every religious meeting where those present believe in supernatural agencies can boast of the Holy Ghost. Not every meeting is distinguished by a spiritual atmosphere. On the contrary, the organisers and leaders of all denominations openly confess, and with infinite grief, that days, months and years pass where there is no such outpouring of the Holy Ghost as is to be desired. The mere belief in supernatural agents as the source of spiritual blessings by no means secures those blessings. Moral enthusiasm is not a perpetual accompaniment of supernaturalistic beliefs. Often church meetings are cold to the freezing-point and hill to the bone every person present. Wherever there is pride and vainglory, wherever the preacher is believed to be a hypocrite, wherever the music is theatrical, wherever the pillars of the church are known to be the supporters of iniquitous commercial enterprises, wherever ladies not so scrupulous in their morals as fine in manners and dress, are the leading spirits of the congregation, no mortal experiences nor does the congregation witness a season of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, a study of church discipline shows that in

proportion as the priest is brave, humane, spiritually-minded, eloquent, indefatigable and self-sacrificing in his ministry, impartially loving the poor as well as the rich, the unfortunate as the fortunate, and perhaps caring most for those who are nobodies—here it is as if the Holy Ghost were never absent, and at any moment it only requires concentration of all activity to the end of deepening the inner experience, and a moral revival begins.

But over and above such general conditions favourable to a spiritual atmosphere, one notes that this atmosphere dominates church services and meetings in proportion as all present have met more than half-way the purpose not only of the preacher but of the Founder of the church and of the ideal of the church. Each comes to the meeting already predisposed, already disciplined by private and secret meditation and prayer. Each comes with the mind already fixed upon the vision of perfect manhood and a perfect fellowship. The very bearing and walk and the look on the faces of men and women as they enter the church reveal to any onlooker their deep, strenuous purpose. When every member of a congregation is thus held by the Ideal, a peculiar calm, a strange and unwonted dignity, a sweet and restful peace pervade the meeting. Every person present is reinforced by the mighty consciousness that all the others are devoted to the same end and are moving in spirit to the same goal. Most sensitively will anyone, called upon to conduct a religious service at such a time, detect and be swayed by this atmosphere, generated the moment people thus bent in spirit come together. His very motions, the look of his face, the quality of his voice, will be modified in such a manner as to be a sign and evidence of a more than wonted elevation of heart and singleness of will. How should not the sermon itself on such an occasion

be radiant with the diffused spiritual light filling the place? Although the sermon had been written before, its very delivery would transfigure it. If it were extemporaneous, a new eloquence, incisiveness and lucidity would mark the preacher's sentences.

In speaking of the purpose and devotion of each individual present at a meeting, I have touched upon the fundamental cause of a spiritual atmosphere. But I would point out that the mere attendance at a meeting, which beforehand has been publicly announced as one for the Worship of the Moral Ideal, is itself a symbolic act and partakes of the nature of a sacrament.

It will be found in a religious service where religion is interpreted wholly in a humanistic and naturalistic sense, that every natural cause of spiritual atmosphere operates not less but more powerfully. For the human understanding then co-operates with the other psychic energies, social and personal, which are in action. If humanists come to their church with the same degree of self-abnegation and consecration to the good of all, with the same concentration upon the supreme ends of life and the necessary means to those ends, everybody feels in the meeting that something great is happening; and it is, for there is nothing greater on earth.

I am convinced, after many years of visiting religious meetings where supernaturalistic interpretations were given to the deeper moral experiences of the human heart, that the ethical work of Christian Church services, when at their moral best, is infinitely valuable and of abiding use. It is in religion as in other departments of human experience and discipline: supernaturalism may obscure to consciousness natural causes but cannot possibly prevent entirely their operation and efficiency. No assignment of effects to miracle or supernatural agency

in any way offends the natural powers and circumstances which produce the effects. It is in religion as it is in physics. A man may deny the vibratory theory of light, but the light takes no offence and the sun not only shines but blesses the man who misunderstands it, as it blesses the plant and animal which are wholly innocent of any theories whatsoever. Therefore to attack supernaturalistic theories, as I think we must do in the interests of the hastening of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, is not to deny the enormous service rendered ethically to the world by the religions of the past. On the other hand, to acknowledge the operation of the redeeming powers is not for a moment to imply that they could not have been brought into more efficient operation had the persons interested understood their nature instead of denying it.

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